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a Bantu-speaking group numbering about one and one third million, whose home is the Benguela Highland of Angola (Portuguese West Africa). Christian missions have worked among them since 1881, the date of founding of the W.C.A.M. of the A.B.C.F.M., with which work the writer has been connected since 1924.

Umbundu mentality. It is not the purpose of this study to appraise Bantu or Umbundu mentality. Every new description of a Bantu culture gives a new angle or vantage point from which to view the versatile mentality of that interesting group of people. All available objective views unite to show us, as Driberg holds for primitive man in general, 'a being as human as ourselves, affected by the same emotions . . . with thoughts, responses, and actions differing in no essential way from our own'[1]—neither the noble savage of Rousseau nor the subhuman creature of more recent doctrinaires. 'The grouping of savages with children and idiots is but another symptom of an attitude which, when faced with a different type of culture, insists on assuming a lower type of mentality to account for that culture.'[1]

It must be owned that different views of primitive mentality are held, but it would seem that those which hold primitive man to be incapable of reasoning logically, his mentality in some way inferior or 'pre-logical', base their conclusions too largely on theoretical or library material and too little on results of actual field work.[2] It is not the purpose of the present study to examine these theories, but a word of protest must be raised against some who, basing their view of the mentality of Bantu peoples on some such theories as those mentioned above, and with or without sup-

[1] J. H. Driberg, *The Savage as He Really Is*, pp. 2, 3 (London: Routledge, 1929).

[2] Cf., for example, L. Levy-Bruhl, *Les Fonctions Mentales dans les Sociétés Inférieures*, *La Mentalité Primitive*, &c. The seriousness with which these and similar theoretical studies have been taken is surprising. Cf. e.g., R. Allier, *Mind of the Savage* (London: Bell, 1929); J. W. C. Dougall, *Characteristics of African Thought* (London: International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, 1932); N. S. Booth, *Teaching a Bantu Community* (MS. copy). Dr. Max Gluckman of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute told me that I had wrongly interpreted Levy-Bruhl, and he kindly loaned me a copy of a paper by Evans-Pritchard which sets forth a different interpretation of Levy-Bruhl's thesis with regard to the 'pre-logical' mentality. It is not my intention here to combat the thesis of the 'pre-logical' mentality, but rather a common interpretation of it (Evans-Pritchard, 'Levy-Bruhl's Theory of Primitive Mentality', *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts of the Egyptian University*, vol. i, pt. ii).

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port from intelligence tests of doubtful suitability, have called in question the 'educability' of some Bantu groups.[1]

I shall not examine these theories but rather leave to descriptions of Umbundu culture given in the main part of the study, the task of showing that the mental capacity of the Ovimbundu is sufficient to enable them to assimilate the education placed at their disposal. Educators who really believe otherwise would hardly waste their time in attempting to educate a people who, after all, may be incapable of education.

> If we do not believe in the logic of the savage and in the identity of his processes of thought with our own, then we should be proved illogical ourselves in attempting to develop along logical lines peoples of an alien mentality, and in attempting to transmit our civilization to peoples mentally incapable of assimilating it.[2]

The capacity of the Ovimbundu and their 'educability' are assumed.

The Approach. All the various types of approach to African education have been classed under one of the two aims: Assimilation, which has represented Latin colonial policy; and Adaptation, which has been more representative of the British and Belgian point of view. *Assimilation* would make African Frenchmen, African Portuguese, &c., of the natives. *Adaptation* would take what is best in both the African and the European cultures in order to produce a better African civilization'.[3]

Within the aim of *assimilation* there may be distinguished at least two policies. One ignores indigenous culture, presents the European culture quite without reference to it, and treats the African as though he had no cultural background—as though he were a *tabula rasa*. The other may study the indigenous culture, but only in order to be able to uproot it the more thoroughly and efficiently.

Within the aim of *adaptation* at least three distinct policies may

[1] See discussion in Malherbe (ed.), *Educational Adaptations*, Chap. XVIII (*N.E.F. Conference Report*, Cape Town, 1937); also P. A. W. Cook, *The Education of a South African Tribe* (Cape Town, 1934).

[2] Driberg, op. cit., p. 4.

[3] There is an interesting discussion of these two policies by H. Dubois, 'Assimilation ou Adaptation?' in *Africa*, 1929, pp. 1 ff. See also the discussion in the Preface of *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa*, by I. Schapera (London, 1934). There are other policies for dealing with the Africans such as repression, exploitation, &c., but since they cannot be classed as educational theories I have not included them in this analysis.

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137 of the lower zones between the plateau and the coast is the baobab (*Adansonia digitata*). Where these lower zones are well watered, especially along the streams, dense tropical forests are the rule.

The Highland proper until quite recent times was well covered with a good variety of trees. This gave a pleasing aspect not lost upon travellers. Commander Cameron, who crossed from Zanzibar to Benguela in 1875, was greatly impressed by the rustic beauty of the country-side:

[114]

> As we went forward the scenery increased in beauty, and at last I was constrained to halt and surrender myself to the enjoyment of the view which lay before me.
>
> I will content myself with asserting that nothing could be more lovely than this entrancing scene, this glimpse of Paradise. To describe it would be impossible. Neither poet, . . . nor painter . . . could by pen or pencil do full justice to the country of Bailundu.
>
> In the foreground were glades in the woodland, varied with knolls crowned by groves of large, English-looking trees, sheltering villages with yellow thatched roofs; . . . plantations with the fresh green of young crops and the bright red of newly hoed ground in vivid contrast, and running streams flashing in the sunlight; while in the far distance were mountains of endless and pleasing variety of form, gradually fading away until they blended with the blue of the sky. . . .
>
> That evening we camped in a wood, a clear space having literally to be cut out of the masses of sweet-scented creepers which festooned the trees.[1]

Some of this natural beauty still remains in Bailundu and other parts of the country, but much of it has gone, as grasslands have taken the place of forest and woodland. Native agriculture and the annual fires have caused much deforestation and much has also come about from the demands of European settlement and the needs of the railway, which up to the present time uses only wood for fuel. The question as to whether the rainfall has yet been much affected is often discussed.

[375]

164 The Benguela Highland is within the tropics and therefore subject to many tropical diseases. Malaria is prevalent owing to the presence of the *Anopheles* mosquito, one of the two essential hosts in the life-cycle of the malaria germ, man being the other. Infant mortality owing to malaria seems to be high among the Ovimbundu. It seems probable, however, that many of the

[1] V. L. Cameron, *Across Africa* (New York: Harpers, 1877), p. 410 f.

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Oluse	*Oluina*
RELIGIOUS	
613 782 793 Regular village worship including agricultural festivals; village headman is also priest.	Family observances including occasional propitiations in case of illness, death, or other misfortunes; for desired economic advantages; mortuary rites. Family head is also priest.

602 114 *Classificatory System of Relationship.* The relationships of the wider kinship groups are quite largely extensions of those of the household, but the Ovimbundu, in common with all people who have a classificatory system, extend these relationships not only further but in quite different ways than do those who have the European (Roman) system. One who would understand the Ovimbundu must understand the Umbundu family from the inside—not as from motives of mere intellectual curiosity but as an Ocimbundu understands it. In order to demonstrate this family structure it will be necessary to present tables and diagrams. Hambly did a very creditable piece of work toward demonstrating the structure of the Umbundu family.[1] I doubt that anyone staying among them an equally short period of time, not knowing their language, could have done better in this respect unless he had come to the task with very exceptional preparation. It is only just to state this and I feel that it is necessary because so far as I am aware, in the five years since it was published, the book has received no adequate appraisal or review.[2] It must be said, however, that Hambly made some noticeable errors in his use of kinship terms owing to the fact that he did not learn the Umbundu language, and that he evidently failed to understand certain points with regard to the social structure.

For greater clarity and precision I am presenting in separate tables the terms which refer to blood relationship and those which refer to relationship by marriage.

[1] W. D. Hambly, op. cit., pp. 189–99.

[2] This book was reviewed in *Africa*, 1935, pp. 391–3, but the reviewer had no first-hand knowledge of the people or their language, which was perhaps his reason for taking up three-fourths of the space at his disposal with questions of orthography. E. W. Smith has taken note of the book (*Africa: What Do We Know of It?*, p. 71), but only to say that it 'is chiefly useful for its description of the material culture'.

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CHAPTER IV

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

THE first and most important factor to be considered with reference to a programme of education or culture change is the social structure of the people among whom the programme is to be set up and carried out. Few writers on missions among the Bantu have considered the significance for the work of the social structure itself. Perhaps the particular social structure and its possible reference to the programme described have been considered too obvious to merit careful consideration. I am reminded of an observation of the late Mr. Justice Holmes that the 'vindication of the obvious is often more important than the elucidation of the obscure'.[1] But formerly it was not considered at all obvious that a mission programme should take into consideration a people's social structure. So great a missionary and anthropologist as the Reverend H. A. Junod concluded with all complacency: 'Bantu collectivism is dying out. In its stead Christianity will promote a healthy and progressive individualism. . . . I see no other way in which it (the race) can escape destruction.'[2] That was written before 1929, since when advocates of individualism have been few, and fewer the students of African life who would wish to 'promote' individualism there.

The majority of missionary writers who have urged the adaptation or adoption of Bantu cultural elements have concerned themselves largely with beliefs, practices, and rites. If they so much as touch upon the social structure of the people under consideration, it is only to lay a basis for description of these other elements.[3] Although a number of writers have urged the desirability of conserving good elements believed to exist in 'Bantu communalism', 'African collectivism', and so on, few have offered concrete suggestions concerning the social structure, as designed to be of immediate or practical value. The one missionary who has

[1] Quoted in mimeographed suggestions concerning the use of *Essentials of Civilization*, by Thomas Jesse Jones (New York, 1929).

[2] Junod, op. cit., and ed., vol. ii, p. 633; 1st ed. (1913), vol. ii, p. 544.

[3] The most recent work of this type which has come to my attention is *The Church and Primitive People* (The Religious Institutions and Beliefs of the Southern Bantu and their Bearing on the Problems of the Christian Missionary), by D. W. T. Shropshire (London: S.P.C.K., 1938).

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pattern 'singled out in the institutions of his culture'.[1] I agree with Fortes on the Tallensi that 'The total pattern is not built up brick by brick like a house, but evolves'.[2] I am not convinced, however, of the necessity for postulating 'embryonic forms' or *schemas* of the total patterns supposed to be present in the child from the beginning.[3] Whether the *schemas* are supposed to be a part of the child's innate equipment, Fortes does not make clear, but I see no necessity for any such hypothesis. The method by which and the situation in which the Ocimbundu child learns, are ample explanation for the early and thorough development of the pattern of his culture.

Neither is it necessary to postulate either 'faculties' or 'instinctive drives' to explain Umbundu education.[4] Rather this study takes a view of 'human nature . . . as consisting essentially of specific situations'.[5] Instances in support of this view could be cited from the descriptive part of this chapter but that would be outside the scope of this study. The most important fact with regard to Umbundu education is its identification with life: the absence of cleavage as between 'school' and society, as between the social sphere of the child and the adult. The most important educational method in use is actual participation in the social and cultural or 'real life' situation. The educational 'content' is the whole Umbundu culture, consisting of attitudes (psychological and social), social usages, skills, observances, and traditional 'literature'. By far the most important are the social attitudes and usages. I turn therefore to the problems of

Social Adjustment

The education of the Ocimbundu child in the traditional social setting is far more social than is the case with us. The child learns

[1] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), p. 254.

[2] M. Fortes, op. cit., p. 42.

[3] Ibid., pp. 42 ff. Fortes attributes the concept of *schemas* to F. C. Bartlett (*Remembering*).

[4] In his discussion of education among the Tallensi, quoted above, Fortes does not specifically mention either of these hypotheses and he rightly remarks that some writers have 'attributed an almost mystical significance to imitation' as the principal method by which a child learns. He then proceeds, however, to classify the learning processes under *Mimesis*, *Identification*, *Co-operation*, and *Play*. Except for the first, these activities are of much importance in Umbundu education.

[5] Hugh Hartshorne, *Character in Human Relations*, p. 195 (New York: Scribner's, 1932); see also Allport, op. cit., p. 81.

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that question concerning the Ovimbundu. Rather, whence did they come and when? Can the lines of their migrations now be ascertained? Can their racial origins be determined with even approximate certainty?

The available evidence regarding origins and migrations of the Ovimbundu is mainly of five sorts: (1) linguistic; (2) legendary, whether of the several groups of the Ovimbundu or of the tribes from which they seem to have sprung; (3) historical; (4) evidence from place-names; and (5) evidence of comparative attitudes and culture-traits as between the Ovimbundu and their neighbours. In addition, we might list evidence of physical measurements and blood-group tests, but such evidence is not yet available for the Ovimbundu.

Tribal Origins

Language Affinities. As I pointed out in the introductory chapter, by linguistic classification the Ovimbundu belong to the western 'province' or group of the Southern Bantu. Linguistically, the Ovimbundu belong with their southern neighbours, the so-called 'Bangala'[1] and with the Ambo and Herero. The northern and eastern neighbours all belong to other language groups. This is a fact that must not be lost sight of, especially since Umbundu has been so often confused with the so-called 'Kimbundu' of the Ndongo or Angola kingdom. We are not surprised to find an author of 1846 declare that 'From the Congo to Cabo Negro (Alexander Bay) these black natives all speak the same language (*bunda*) with small changes of dialect';[2] but when this confusion is compounded in works laying claim to considerable value as linguistic and ethnological studies, as, for example, one which was published by a well-known museum in 1930,[3] a protest is in order.

[1] The Ndombe, Nganda, Cilengi, Cipungo, Muila, Mulondo, Humbi, Gambue, &c. I do not know that the term 'Bangala' may be applied with correctness to these people. I only use it for convenience. See 'Notas Etnográficas sôbre os povos indígenas do Distrito da Huila', *Boletim Geral das Colónias*, fev. 1935, p. 41.

[2] Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios sôbre a Statistica d'Angola e Benguella*, part i, p. 196.

[3] See F. u. W. Jaspert, *Die Völkerstämme Mittel-Angolas* (Frankfort, 1930). It is reported that the spurious nature of the works of these writers has been exposed by Baumann and others, but although I have searched, apart from a rather ambiguous footnote in Baumann's *Lunda*, I have found no such references, and am unable to say whether this has been done. The origin of the erroneous concept of a Bunda language (also called Bundu, or Mbundu), has been traced, and correctly I think on the whole, by Max Buchner, 'Die Ambakisten' (in

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Sir Harry Johnston made this classification abundantly clear in his monumental work published in 1919,[1] and the recent translation and revision of Carl Meinhof's important work on Bantu phonology[2] has used Umbundu extensively for illustrative material. It should now be abundantly clear to all that Umbundu is the northernmost of the Southern Bantu languages, and that in their language the Ovimbundu have elements in common with their southern neighbours.

Traditional Histories. Each of the principal groups among the Ovimbundu has legends with regard to the migrations of their forefathers and the country from which they came. For the most part these legends refer to ancestors of the respective royal families, but some references are also made to the people whom these new-comers found in the country which they came to occupy. All of these legends point to countries of origin in the north or north-east. Several writers have noted this as a fact,[3] but it is necessary to take more explicit notice of each of several legends.

Ndulu has not received as much notice as have some of the other Umbundu kingdoms, but I have come to the conclusion that it is perhaps one of the oldest. The tradition runs that the progenitor of the dynasty, Katekula-Mengo, was an elephant-hunter and that he came with his wife, Ukungu (also called Mbala) from the region of the confluence of the Luandu and the Kuanza rivers. Following elephant-herds down the course of the Kuanza they passed the famous rocks of Pungu-a-Ndongo and in them left the imprints of Katekula-Mengo's bow and of Ukungu's basket, which, it is said, may be seen to this day; for in that early day the rocks had not yet hardened but were like fresh concrete. This couple

Zeitschr. f. Ethnol., 1915, pp. 398 ff.). This writer also interestingly and properly shows how the name Kimbundu came to be mistakenly applied to the Ngola or Ndongo language. The error, however, still continues to be propagated (e.g. *vide* A. Miranda Magalhães, 'Os Ambundus de Angola', &c., in *Trabalhos do 1º Congresso Nacional de Antropologia Colonial*, Pôrto, 1934, vol. ii, pp. 536–53). This article contains so little of value that a systematic refutation would not be worth while. The writer's notions on the Bantu migrations seem especially fantastic.

[1] *A Comparative Vocabulary of Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, vol. i.

[2] Meinhof, *An Introduction to the Phonology of the Bantu Languages*, translated, revised, and enlarged (Berlin and London, 1932).

[3] J. T. Tucker, *Drums in the Darkness*, p. 34 f. W. D. Hambly (*The Ovimbundu of Angola*) notes this fact at the beginning of his otherwise rather confused chapter on 'Historical Sources'.

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has it that the people then in the country, apart from the Songo, were 'Ngangela'[1] tribes. Magyar[2] has given different tradition with regard to the origin of the kingdom of Viye. He says that the forefathers came from the land of 'Moropu'[3] about three hundred years previously under the two chiefs 'Kinguri and Schakambundi', and, having conquered 'Masongo', settled on the Luandu River, engaging in agriculture between raids. They had the custom of eating their prisoners, and when there were not enough prisoners they lapsed into internecine warfare and ate each other. Certain leaders began to fear tribal suicide and formed a secret society of buffalo-hunters (*'empakasserros'*), pledged to give up cannibalism by substituting the flesh of the buffalo. When the tribal elder (the 'Jaga') suspected the innovation and objected strenuously, rather than fight the buffalo-hunters moved away and settled on the Kuanza River. After a further subdivision of the tribe, one party, 'under a certain Bihe', went south to the Kukema River, where 'Ganguella' were living, and founded the kingdom of 'Bihe'. Later on, continues Magyar, the people of the 'Jaga' mixed with neighbouring tribes, took on milder manners, and finally found themselves in the land of Kassanji 'near the Kingdom of the well-known Jaga of Kassanji'. This tradition related by Magyar cannot be completely harmonized with the familiar legend of Viye and Kahanda. I have given that tradition as Viye elders told it to me, and have noted that it had already been recorded before. Since these two traditions are at variance, since the version gotten by Serpa Pinto in 1878 is the same one and the only one which is current to-day, and since it is unlikely that in only twenty-one years, between 1857 (when Magyar was in Viye) and 1878, a tradition as interesting as that of the buffalo-hunters should have been forgotten, I am inclined to hypothecate that the source (whether immediate or remote) of the tradition given by Magyar was *not* Viye, but perhaps Songo or even Lunda, both of which regions were visited by Magyar. This report probably contains

where, near Chinguar, is the place called Saviye (Father of Viye); and later, in Ngalangi, whence, according to Ngalangi tradition, came Viye (cf. *infra*).

[1] 'Ngangela' is a deprecatory term by which the Ovimbundu designate the Luimbi, Cimbandi, Lucazi, Nyemba, Ngonzelo, Cokue, and other tribes who live to the east.

[2] Op. cit., p. 266 f.

[3] Dias de Carvalho (*Ethnographia e História Tradicional dos povos da Lunda*, p. 66) explains that this was a term which *os nossos antigos viajantes* applied to Lunda.

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which the 'Jagas' had, although they soon adopted the language of the people whom they conquered. As recently as fifty years ago the mother of the king of Bailundu spoke Umbundu brokenly, since she came from Cipala, and her sons were sent to complete their education with her people where later they were often called to rule.[1]

Recognition by the Ciyaka people that their forefathers came from the region where the Imbangala now live has been noted. It may have been a similar tradition heard in Viye which started Magyar to find out the tradition of 'Kinguri'. Such a tradition was mentioned in Viye as late as 1898.[2] This relation between the Umbundu ruling families and either the 'Jagas' or the Imbangala has been noted by several of the Portuguese writers. Lopes de Lima, in his History of the Discovery of the Congo, adds a footnote on the 'Jagas' as follows: 'The Jagas are almost nomadic peoples . . . coming from the interior of Africa, . . . there are some on the frontiers of the Congo, Angola, and Benguella, where some have fixed their habitations (as those of Cassange, and Bailundo).'[3] Writing in 1797 a certain Col. Pinheiro de Lacerda said of the inhabitants of Ngalangi, Kakondà, Wambu, Bailundu, &c.: 'These are they of the uplands, who are divided into two groups, those of one are called "Quinbundos",[4] (these do not eat human flesh); the others are called "Quimbangalas", who eat it, and when they make their sacrifice, which all attend, all eat the "Macongo".'[5] At that period the diversity of these two component parts of the Ovimbundu people was so apparent that they were even spoken of as separate and distinct peoples.

Place-names. Before leaving the subject of migratory movements a word should be said on the evidence of place-names. There is nothing to prove, except in a few instances where traditions have been collected, that the recurrence of identical or similar names at different places indicates the actual lines of migration followed by the several tribal groups represented. It may be said, however, that this line of evidence, taken together

[1] See *Missionary Herald*, 1888, p. 70.

[2] *Missionary Herald*, 1898, p. 108.

[3] *Annaes Mar. Col.*, 1845, p. 93.

[4] Taken from the singular form ocimbundu. As already explained, the change of *chi* to *qui* is a commonly met mutilation of the Bantu forms.

[5] *Annaes Mar. Col.*, 1845, p. 488. There follows a circumstantial account of the ceremony of *Oku lia Ekango*, to which reference has already been made.

there was a great metal industry in Viye, where hoes were made for trade with the interior; later the wholesale manufacture of hoes was taken over by Ndulu, where there are the best and most easily accessible deposits of iron. In exchange for hoes they received palm-oil or cattle from other regions, or salt, rum, or goods from the coast. Other regional specialisations were :- Kasongi and the Sele country for palm-oil, Cikuma for beeswax, cattle from Ngalangi, Kalukembe, and, further south, corn-meal from Ciyaka, Civula and Bailundu.(1)

SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

KINSHIP AND DESCENT

The Ovimbundu appear to have a system of double descent which has not yet been fully reported and analysed, and whose nature is not very clear from existing accounts. The following outline is based on information given by Childs,(2) who unfortunately details the functions but not the composition of the kin groups concerned. In a review(3) of Childs' book, Barnes has formulated a descent system which would be congruent with Childs' description, and his suggestions are outlined here.

The epata

Childs translates *epata* as "blood relatives", and his use of the term suggests that it may have either a general or a limited sense. Thus he writes (p.42): "Nearly all of the villagers belong to the same *epata* or extended family, which includes both lines of descent. Most of them belong to the father's family *(olusa)*, and the mother's family *(olwina)* may also be represented." And, in another context, (p.44): "When an Ocimbundu speaks of his *epata* (family) in the sense of a large and widespread organization with a recognized head....it is generally his *olwina* [mother's family] to which he refers."

The olusa and the olwina

Every Ocimbundu belongs in the first instance to two distinct kin groupings: the *olusa*, to whom he is related through his father, and the *olwina* to whom he is related through his mother. Uterine brothers and sisters belong to the same *olusa* and *olwina*, but to the male and female side respectively, according to sex. (see below.) A difficulty has arisen because both Hambly(4) and Childs appear to regard both groups as bilateral. Hambly states explicitly that the *olusa*, or *epata lia tate* (family of my father) includes *all* relatives on the father's side, and the *olwina* or *epata lia nai* (family of my mother) *all* relatives on the mother's side. Childs writes (p.45) "Bearing in mind *their bilateral nature* ..... the functions of [the *olusa* and the *olwina*] may be summarised...". But from his summary it is obvious that the *olusa* and the *olwina* cannot be bilateral groups, neither can they have parallel descent systems of any kind. Marriage is patrilocal, and the *olusa* forms a local unit while the *olwina* is

(1) Childs, 1949, p.295.
(2) Man, September 1950, p.127.
(3) 1949, pp.42-6.
(4) Op.cit., pp.191-2.

621 The total number of households is 44, or 48 including those of the four
592 section heads. It should be noted that there is a discrepancy in Child's
114 figures (apart from an obvious misprint):(1) in another context he writes that section B contains only 12 houses (not even *households*), while from this table it would appear that section B has 15 household heads, including that of the section head; and section C is said to have 6 households, while only 4 (again counting the section head) are accounted for in this table.

591 Childs states(2) that the incidence of patrilocal marriage in Ngendo
114 is fairly typical of Umbundu country, but unfortunately gives little information regarding the relationship of the various spouses to each other or concerning the location of the villages from which they came. Matrilocal marriage is recognised as a possibility: of the three relatives by marriage listed above, one was a husband of a daughter of the headman, another the widow of a younger brother of the headman, who should have been inherited by a younger brother (?) or a mother's brother of the deceased, or, failing that, could have returned to her father's village. Of those listed above as sisters' children, two were widows who had come to live in the village with their mother's brothers.(3)

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The village headman(4)

622 The village headman *(sekulu yimbo)* is also the head of the *oluse*
793 which forms the nucleus of the village group, and is related agnatically to most of the householders. He alone may speak of the village as *imbo*
782 *liange* (my village); the heads of sections, who are also called *sekulu*(5) may speak possessively only of their own sections *(ocitipulo cange)*, and other villagers speak only of "our village" *(imbo lietu)*.(6) The headman functions as both priest and legal head of the village. As priest he has in his compound the *etambo* (spirit hut), in which the insignia of office are kept, and in which he prays to the ancestral spirits. Upon occasion he may sleep there, usually offering a prayer to the spirits when he wakes during the night. The *etambo* may also be
[341] used as a lodging place for respected guests, or as a store-house for possessions not used every day. Childs states that he officiates at regular village worship, including agricultural festivals; Hambly adds that he may lead the people in offering sacrifices when epidemics of
613 sickness break out in the village. It has been noted above(7) that it is the function of the *oluise* head to lead such rituals when illness occurs within the *oluise*. In general the village head is responsible for
[622] matters - particularly agriculture and public health - which affect the whole village; individuals, both for protection and for help and other

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.28, line 27, where "twenty-four" should read "forty-four".
(2) On the basis of the FH genealogies and 74 marriage-schedules which he collected. He does not, unfortunately, give examples or show how the comparison was made.
(3) Based on Childs, op.cit., pp.25-31.
(4) This section is based on Childs, op.cit., pp.36-7.
(5) It has been noted above that *sekulu* is used for all men (and some women) of the grandfather's generation.
(6) op.cit., p.36. (7) p.18.

683 One of the commonest forms of punishment for sorcery was, and still is, banishment. Only the chief could pronounce the death penalty. Charges of sorcery are sometimes brought today to civil courts and to church courts under the guise of "poisoning".(1)

781 776 171 There are obvious gaps in the information on Umbundu religion and magic e.g. on spirits other than those of ancestors; on ritual connected with the ancestors; on productive and protective magic; on the work of the medicine-man as distinct from the diviner, and on the functions of the two separate offices of family priest. From existing accounts, however, Umbundu magico-religious concepts would appear to have much in common with those of the peoples to the east of the Plateau, and many of the words used for these concepts (*ngombo, ohamba, wanga, nganga* e.g.) are in fact the same. These peoples have been described in another section of the Survey.(2)

THE LIFE CYCLE

852 114 Childs' chapters on infancy, childhood, and adolescence form the main part of his book, and his treatment of the subject is much more detailed and on a deeper level than information offered by other writers,(3) and should be consulted.

BIRTH

844 A woman remains in her husband's village for the birth of her children. During the first birth, she is generally assisted by older women of the village, usually relatives of the husband. No man is present unless delayed labour entails the presence of a medical practitioner, or a diviner. Difficult delivery is said to be caused by broken taboos, [845] adultery on the part of the mother, sorcery, or the woman's own refusal to give birth. There is little ceremony connected with childbirth, and a woman may give birth to her second and later children alone when she is [846] in the fields. There is a customary lying-in period until the cord falls from the navel, but this is frequently ignored today.

845 *Twins* are welcomed but are considered prodigies whose birth requires the administrations of an *ocimbanda*.(4) Soon after the birth, and every month while the children are growing, the whole village takes part in a ceremony to preserve their lives. In the case of triplets, one is given to the paramount chief.(5)

553 Naming usually takes place, in the case of a first-born, on the day of its birth. Childs notes several factors:

(a) The name (*onduko*) should have been borne by a relative, whether living or dead, whose character and state of well-being are satisfactory; sometimes the child may be considered the re-incarnation of the deceased relative after whom he is named.½

(1) Childs, personal communication. (2) McCulloch, 1951, pp.72-83.
(3) Hambly, (2) 1934, pp.212-33, and Cashmore, 1944.
(4) Ennis, 1945. (5) Childs, 1949, p.83.

½ [Childs, op. cit., p. 87-]

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175 that the Church participated actively (T. Lewis, The Old Kingdom of Kongo, *Geog. Journ.*, 1908, pp. 598–600).

Political influence of the Portuguese, working often through the agency of Jesuit priests, led to factions within the Congo Empire, and the resulting disturbances caused movements of peoples that affected the whole of northern Angola and the population of the Benguela Highlands.

Portuguese penetration of the hinterland of Angola, especially from Loanda to Bihé, was concerned with attempts to subjugate native tribes, the establishment of trading posts, and the encouragement of the slave trade (S. Marquardsen, Angola, 1928, pp. 6–10).

439 721 The value of the Portuguese as allies of Umbundu caravans from Bihé lay in their ability to supply guns and powder to their native henchmen, who gave something more than military service in return. In response to Portuguese demand for slaves and ivory, Umbundu caravans made long journeys into the Congo basin, Rhodesia, south and southwest Angola, and possibly across Africa to lakes Tanganyika and Nyasa. The arms supplied in exchange for ivory and slaves must have helped the Ovimbundu in all their predatory excursions.

648 Thus the Ovimbundu were, in the early centuries of contact with the Portuguese, invaders encouraged in the building up of their tribal life and resources. Never were the Portuguese strong enough completely to subjugate northern Angola. Relationships with natives, especially the Bihéan section of the Ovimbundu, were directed toward alliances on a commercial basis. The political result of this was a combination of the Portuguese and the stronger tribes for the exploitation of the weaker.

167 177 The historical ethnology of the southwest Congo is so complex that the elements are difficult to disentangle. The number of tribes concerned is great, and their movements are not easy to follow; but a gradual extension of people from the Congo in a southwesterly direction through Lunda to the Benguela Highlands (1600–1800) seems to be the summation of all the conflict. I regard the Ovimbundu as the most southerly branch of these mass movements, during which they received a discipline that enabled them to make their home in central Angola, despite opposition from the Portuguese and earlier arrivals.

114 For these conclusions reliance has been placed on the extensive field work and historical analyses of E. Torday and T. A. Joyce, whose "Notes on the Ethnography of the Bambala" (*J.R.A.I.*, XXXV, pp. 398–426) have proved of particular value in this connection.

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As early as 1600 there were cattle as far north as Benguela, and the Jaggas regarded these as a most valuable part of their plunder. Palms are a characteristic part of the vegetation of Angola north of the Benguela Highlands. Evidently the Jaggas moved extensively in northern Angola because they cut down palms for making wine (Battell, p. 30). The usual method is to tap the top of a standing tree, but the Jaggas were an itinerant people who did not cultivate palms.

Sprinkling the blood of sacrificed animals on a newly kindled fire I have mentioned in connection with Umbundu rites celebrating the founding of a new village. The Jaggas carried out this ceremony before a raiding expedition, when cows and other animals were sacrificed (Battell, p. 33). Battell mentions the use of red *tukula* wood for personal decoration. This wood (*Pterocarpus tinctorius*) is used in many parts of Angola at the present time.

Reference to Battell confirms the information given to me in relation to an old iron gong obtained at Ngalangi. He says (p. 20), "The general did strike his gong, which is an instrument of war that soundeth like a bell, and presently made an oration with a loud voice."

Battell reported that the Jaggas wore beads of ostrich eggshell. Ravenstein, the editor of this volume in the Hakluyt Series, seems to doubt this statement, saying, "There are no ostriches in Angola, and as to beads made of ostrich eggs I can give no explanation." I noted the presence of captive ostriches in southern Angola as far north as Gambos. The Vakuanyama women greatly value their long necklaces of ostrich-eggshell beads. Necklaces made in the north of Angola are traded to the south and conversely, each kind of necklace having a high value due to remoteness of origin. This instance, like many other points, confirms the reliability of Battell's observations in Angola.

Father Jerome Merolla (1682) describes the poison ordeal which was used from the Congo estuary to San Salvador (Churchills' Voyages, II, p. 675). "The aforesaid oath is administered to the supposed traitor by a sort of wizard, who, making a certain composition out of the juices of herbs, serpent's flesh, pulp of fruits, and divers other things, gives it to the supposed delinquent to drink. If guilty (as they tell you) he will immediately fall down in a swoon or trembling to the ground." The marimba was used, and a double iron gong was carried before a chief and struck by an attendant.

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The foregoing facts, when compared with field work among the Ovimbundu, indicate that the old culture of the Congo and northern Angola bears a strong resemblance to Umbundu culture at the present day. A more detailed analysis of this resemblance is made in chapter X.

The following notes dealing with exploration in Angola (1800–1930) are adduced for critical comparison with my own observations among the Ovimbundu.

The work of Sir R. F. Burton describing the exploration of Lacerda and other Portuguese pioneers, is more useful for geographical than for ethnological information. Lacerda's journey to Czambe, south of Lake Moero, was performed in 1798. A mention of veneration for the dead and consultation of the deceased on all occasions of war or of good fortune, is made (p. 127). These are important points in the present tribal life of the Ovimbundu.

Bowditch (1824) writes from information given to him by Almeida and Saldanha. There are valuable references to the Vacilenge, a people adjacent to the Ovimbundu, who refused to kill their cattle, "rather than do which they will endure famine to extremity." This note was made about Long. 15° E. and Lat. 15° S. (p. 34). The cattle were milked, and cattle-raiding by the Ovimbundu was common at this time. Many present-day Ovimbundu do not milk their cattle, but the Vacilenge still follow their milking custom observed before 1824.

Livingstone's journey through northeast and northern Angola in 1853 contains references to the Vachokue who seemed bent on plunder (I, p. 370). Livingstone noted cotton spinning, which I recorded as an occupation of males of the Ovimbundu at Elende. Livingstone, like other early travelers, encountered caravans of Bihéans (Ovimbundu) bearing elephants' tusks and beeswax, commodities, which, along with slaves, formed the chief merchandise of these caravans from the Benguela Highlands (p. 466). Livingstone notes and sketches (Plate XIII, Fig. 10) the double-handled hoe (p. 442) which is still used.

J. J. Monteiro (I, p. 61) saw the poison ordeal administered. The poison itself was prepared from the thick hard bark of a large tree (*Erythrophlaeum guineense*). The place of observation was Mongue Grande, just south of the Congo estuary, and again Monteiro was present when the poison cup was given to two women at Ambrizette. Of this ordeal there is more to be said when discussing the culture contacts of the Ovimbundu, because the ordeal is a basic factor of

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171 wide distribution in Africa (C. Wiedemann, 1909) and the ceremony
175 still survives among the Ovimbundu in modified form.

[114] Though an informative writer, Monteiró is sometimes vague; he says (I, p. 278) that circumcision is a universal custom among the blacks of Angola. In view of the extent of Angola, the diversity of tribes, and the fact that Monteiro traveled over only a small part of the country, this information is misleading.

Monteiro is the only writer in whose works I have found a reference to the Vasele tribe; probably no part of Angola has been so neglected as the Esele country in the hinterland of Novo Redondo. At the present day the Vasele have a reputation for cannibalism.
[266] Monteiro saw human flesh eaten at Cuacra, while the skulls of the victims were placed on adjacent trees. Monteiro states (II, p. 167) that on the death of a king the Mucelis (Vasele) put out all the fires in the kingdom; these were relighted by the succeeding king who
[321] used fire produced by rubbing two sticks together. The flat beads of shell called *dongos*, made from *Achatina monetaria* (II, p. 168), are made today and traded to the far south of Angola, where their novelty assures them a value far beyond their intrinsic worth. I was fortunate in obtaining an example of the old beheading ax mentioned by Monteiro (II, p. 157) and sketched by Cavazzi (p. 210). Par-
[262] boiled and roasted rats were offered to me as food; Monteiro mentions the offering of a roasted rat on a skewer (I, p. 99).

The account of Commander V. L. Cameron, who left Zanzibar for his journey across Africa in 1873, mentions several points of anthropological importance in relation to the Angolan section of his
[756] journey. Cameron saw a net-covered medicine-man of the Kibokue (Vachokue) wearing a mask and a kilt of grass (p. 384). The function
[524] of this man was to frighten devils from the woods. The contest in which boys discharge their arrows at a rolling root was seen by Cameron near Kagnombe (Cangamba?). Skulls of victims killed in
[797] war were spiked on poles (p. 399). The diviner was followed by attendants who struck iron gongs, while the diviner himself shook a rattle made of basket-work in the form of a dumb-bell (p. 404). Cameron gives an accurate description of the divination basket and its use without going into details. These I have been able to supply
[482] (chapter IX). The explorer met caravans of Bihéans, renowned carriers then as they are today. They were usually drunk and abusive; in some instances they attempted to rob the stragglers.
000 The use of caterpillars as food is noted (p. 416): "A man cut open

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The use of caterpillars as food is noted (p. 416): "A man cut open a large cocoon, extracted the contents, and smacked his lips with great gusto." My field notes mention the use of caterpillars as food.

Capello and Ivens (1877–80) remark on the burial places of hunters which are distinguishable by the skulls of antelopes, buffalo, and hippopotamuses, stuck on upright poles, mixed with skulls of oxen killed in honor of the defunct. The writers noted that a heap of stones protected the body. I photographed two types of cairn in the regions of Ganda and Luimbale respectively. Capello and Ivens are not precise in their locality, but I judge it to have been Long. 17° E. and Lat. 13° S., a considerable distance from my own observations (Plates XXXII, Fig. 1; LXXIV, Fig. 1).

I photographed the stilt-walkers at the final stages of the initiation ceremonies at Cangamba. These men had no costumes; on the contrary they were almost naked but were covered with white clay. Capello and Ivens (p. 295), saw a stilt-walker with a feathered mask and a netting costume. Such attire I saw on an Uluchazi medicine-man, but not on the stilt-walkers (Plate LXXXI, Figs. 1, 2).

I was unable to obtain information about the stilt-walkers, but Capello states that they castigated misdemeanants, punished shameless women, and accused criminals. Capello and Ivens were 187 miles to the northwest of my area of observation. The Uluchazi medicine-man, who appeared with the stilt-walkers during my visits, was said to make bad magic for women. The men ignored him but women gathered round in a derisive way; they quickly scattered when he pursued them.

Serpa Pinto, who made his journey across Angola in 1878, has so many references to customs and objects still extant, that I propose to tabulate his observations because of their value in showing the preservation of indigenous traits in spite of Portuguese contacts.

The body of a chief is buried with a covering of oxhide. Many oxen are sacrificed at the death of a king. The heir to the deceased is bound to sacrifice his whole herd in order to regale his people and give peace to the departed (S. Pinto, I, p. 63). The Ovimbundu conform at the present time to similar methods of burial and sacrifice.

Near Huambo, Serpa Pinto saw in every village a kind of "temple for conversation." This is the *onjango*, that I have described and photographed (Plate XLVIII, Fig. 1). It is the house in which all males foregather for the evening meal, which is brought by their women (I, p. 96).

The gathering and eating of caterpillars is described. This continues today (I, p. 120).

175 [316] [325] Serpa Pinto saw shafts for the working of iron ore in the neighborhood of Cubango. The ore was mixed with charcoal and smelted in shallow pits. It is stated that the iron was sometimes tempered with ox-grease and salt. The bellows are of the type made at Elende (I, p. 128). Of the tempering process I have no confirmation.

175 787 [764] Somewhere near Bihé Serpa Pinto saw the ceremony of questioning a corpse which was made to sway to and fro, the people believing all the while that it does so without human intervention. The diviner declared that the soul of a dead person will tell who caused the death (I, p. 130). I observed and photographed this ceremony (Plate XLV, Fig. 1).

[695] The ordeal of the poison cup is described; blood-letting, and divination by shaking articles in a basket are also mentioned. Pinto says that in the articles that appear uppermost the diviner reads what his hearers are desirous of learning of the past, present, or future. Sorcery and rain-making are likewise briefly mentioned (I, p. 132). The divination basket, the poison ordeal, and rain-making, are Umbundu cultural traits today.

171 224 Here Pinto illustrates the existing practice of mounting the skulls of animals killed by a hunter on a pole in the village. There is a further reference to this custom among the Ambuellas (I, p. 333). These instances, combined with those personally noted, give a wide distribution for the practice (I, p. 177).

175 [304] Pinto saw the operation of tooth mutilation among the Luimba. The operation was performed with a knife which was struck by repeated light blows (I, p. 209).

[711] Pinto illustrates arrowheads in use in 1879 (I, pp. 277, 346). These are exactly the same as those made and used in 1929 (Plate XVII, Figs. 1–9).

[412] Axes used by the Luchazi are sketched with a detail that shows the old forms to persist without alteration (II, p. 36).

[321] Water-pipes made from horns and gourds by the Luina of eastern Angola are of the forms now used in that region, also by the Ovimbundu of the present day (II, pp. 33, 37).

175 114 For use in checking and supplementing my observations Serpa Pinto's book was found to be of the greatest service, though the precise locality was sometimes difficult to identify. This explorer, in common with others, scattered his ethnological observations among descriptions of the route and botanical, zoological, and other notes.

Lux traveled from Loanda due east, following the Kwanza on the northern bank between 9° and 10° S. Lat., and so into Lunda.

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He draws the crescentic arrowhead (p. 123) still common among the Ovimbundu and Vachokue; the double iron gong (p. 122); and the musical bow, which he calls a viola (p. 121). 175 114 [534]

Sogaur states that iron-working had an advanced technique at Dindo, more than half a century ago. According to Sogaur, the blacksmith was using scrap iron from European sources (II, p. 14). 175 326

Perhaps the most valuable of Chatelain's books is "Fifty Folk Tales of Angola." The stories are accompanied by translations and ethnological notes, the most important of which are references to the carrying of a corpse on a pole; the building of a cairn of stones over the corpse of a hunter; matrilineal descent and the power of the maternal uncle over the persons of his nieces and nephews (sisters' children). My observations included some details respecting the pawning of a sister's children to redeem the debts of their mother's brother. Chatelain adds that sisters' children are successors to private property and chieftainship (pp. 8–10). My notes agree that property is inherited by children of a deceased man's sister, but my informants said that a new chieftain is normally the eldest son of the principal wife of the dead chief. Chatelain's folklore stories, fifty in number, relate chiefly to animals; this was the only kind of story told to me, but W. C. Bell has recorded a few tales of another type. 173 [114] [764] [611] [604] [428] [538]

Marquardsen (1928) devotes only one-fourth of his book to the ethnology of Angola, which he treats in a very general way; there is no section dealing specifically with any particular tribe. The author calls attention to Chapman's observation of rock paintings of South African Bushman type, between Cuma and Luimbale in northwest Angola. I have elsewhere remarked on the occasional occurrence of physical types which show a strain of Bushman blood. Today Bushmen penetrate southern Angola from the Kalahari (Plate LXIX, Figs. 1, 2), but their presence in times past or present does not affect the course of history or the data of ethnology to an appreciable extent. 114 177 [531] [144]

Marquardsen gives some notes of a general kind on Vaheneca, Mahuila and other tribes of southwest Angola. The suggestion is feasible that the Umbundu name Suku, for a supreme being, is the same as the Nzambi of Lunda and the Congo. Marquardsen refers to the importance of the maternal uncle in Umbundu society, to the poison ordeal, and to the burial of an Umbundu chief in oxhide, all of which points were recorded in my observations at Elende. 114 101

Ferreira Diniz's book is unobtainable, but, judging from the summary given in *Anthropos* (XX, 1925, pp. 321–331), the information was collected by a questionnaire widely distributed among adminis-

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114 trative posts. I agree that people between Caconda and Huila
101 represent a racial mixture of the Ovimbundu and the Ovambo. The record speaks of painting-houses for girls at Cabinda, an item which agrees with reports from other sources. The jottings concerning tribes from Cabinda to the far south of Angola are too vague to be used in ethnological work with confidence.

There are many points on which the work of A. Schachtzabel should be consulted for the purpose of making comparisons with my [621] own observations. The chief of these are a note and photograph on [281] village construction (p. 130); the musical bow (p. 32); the loom [775] (plate VI); transmigration of the soul of a chief into an animal (p. 51); [524] and the game of mancala (p. 52). My observations of initiation at [881] Katoko, Ngalangi, and Cangamba agree well with that of Schachtzabel at Katoko, but I was able to obtain more detail and more [283] numerous photographs of the ritual of initiation. The spinning of cotton (p. 143) is exactly the process so frequently witnessed now at Elende. Iron-working (p. 111) appears to be comparable with the technique at Elende, but Schachtzabel seems to have missed the ritual. I was not so fortunate as this author in finding the old type of iron-smelting furnace in use.

114 The work of Statham is devoted primarily to hunting and descrip-
136 tions of plant and animal life. The chapter given to a casual description of people among whom he passed is not useful as ethnology; but the book is of service in providing a background of natural history. Information on the tsetse fly in Angola (p. 294) assists ethnological work by showing the determining effect of this biological factor. [231] Presence of the fly is prohibitive to cattle-keeping, therefore cattle are not kept along the river courses which are infested with this pest.

114 Alexander Barns made no pretence of writing more than a travel book; nevertheless he publishes photographs of ethnological value, gives useful historical summaries, and deals with economic problems of production and transportation.

114 Tucker's book "Drums in the Darkness," though written to
175 interest the American public in mission work, contains many ethnological statements. The chief of these relate to the structure of the compound (p. 37); the dress of women (p. 39); naming of twins and triplets; and other items which agree well with data from the district in which I worked. There are notes on drum signals (p. 74) and [202] cannibalism (p. 77). Apparently drum signals were in use at Bihé half a century ago. Forty years ago a slave was killed and eaten [266] at the installation ceremonies for a new king, a point that was noted

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in the works of Battell, Cavazzi, and other early writers. A description of the whipping of boys at initiation (p. 99) agrees with my own records, but details of the period and place are not given by Tucker. Questioning a corpse (p. 102) is a ceremony I have witnessed and described, but the instance referred to by Tucker relates to the interrogation of the corpse of a chief with regard to his choice of a successor; there are laws of succession, but these may be waived. The ceremony described in my monograph was conducted to discover the cause of death and not to determine succession. If Tucker has any detailed information with regard to puberty ceremonies for girls his reticence is regrettable (p. 142). Tucker says that suicide among women is common (p. 143). A mention of *ocisunji*, a feast for spirits at which meat is offered to idols, is interesting (p. 168) but details are lacking, and the use of the word idols is ambiguous. The information respecting use of charms is corroborative of my own observations in two other centers, Elende and Ngalangi.

The most recent publication on the ethnology of Angola is that of F. and W. Jaspert of the Städtisches Völkermuseum, Frankfort, 1930. Their journey was undertaken primarily to make collections for a museum, but linguistic and ethnological information was recorded among several tribes, notably the Kimbundu, Vachokue, Luchazi, Luimba, and Kusongo. The farthest point attained in a southerly direction was just north of Kipungo, and the general line of march was from Benguela to the northeast, into Lunda. There is very little overlapping in the work of the Jasperts and myself. My itinerary took me to the extreme south into the Vakuanyama country, and to the far east of Moxico among the Vachokue.

My work is presented as a monograph on the Ovimbundu only, and of their culture I treat exclusively, with some reference to the culture contacts observed on all sides of them. The Jasperts do not give an entire section to any one tribe; but combine their information respecting the tribes in a concurrent way, under such subjects as technology, language, and art.

If the sections relating to history and languages are excluded there remain a hundred pages, only one-sixth of which refer to the Ovimbundu; but there is a difficulty in reading through the book without being confused as to the tribe and exact locality under discussion.

The pages devoted to a comparative vocabulary form an important part of the work, and one which I barely touched, though I prepared an outline of Umbundu grammar and made dictaphone records of the

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114 Umbundu language. The illustrations in photogravure are excellent,
126 but the small-scale map is difficult to follow.

114 As might be expected in a work covering an enormous tract of
241 country, the information is of a very general kind; I have nowhere
224 been able to check in any detail on my own observations. F. and W. Jaspert recognize that Umbundu culture is primarily based on agriculture, maize being the most important crop, but they do not admit the importance of hunting (p. 16).

I saw many successful parties of Umbundu hunters, tested their precision with the bow and arrow, and was able to record the ritual connected with the initiation of a professional hunter. There is also a ceremony before the hunter sets out. It would be more accurate to say that, although Umbundu culture is based primarily on agriculture, hunting still retains some of its earlier importance.

114 The diagrams of houses in different parts of Angola are a useful feature of the work. I made many photographs but did not record details of planning.

114 The masks I obtained are exactly like those pictured, but my
881 observations were carried out a long way to the southeast of the point where the Jasperts touched the Vachokue culture. I do not understand from their description whether the writers saw an initiation ceremony. They state that boys are circumcised and girls are excised when very young, even at the age of five or six years. I observed initiation camps and dances at three centers, Ngalangi, Katoko, and Cangamba; the last named is the main center of Vachokue culture. The male novices varied in age from twelve to sixteen years hence they were older than the novices mentioned by the Jasperts. I was informed that there were no excision operations for girls, though at Ngalangi, Vanyemba girls were secluded in the bush during initiation rites lasting for a month.

Bibliographical references to the research of H. Baumann will be found useful for comparative study. His detailed record of initiation among the Vachokue is valuable as a check on my observation, as we worked independently in areas separated by several hundred miles.

Consultation of historical sources gives the following answers to questions which were asked as an introduction to this chapter.

174 On the grounds of tribal tradition, historical evidence, and cultural affinities, the original home of the Ovimbundu was likely to have been in the southwest Congo. The Ovimbundu undoubtedly possess important cultural traits that have been characteristic of the southern Congo region from the earliest time for which a record exists.

IV. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

142 Among the Ovimbundu there are two main physical types. One of these is of brown skin color and slender build. In this type the calves and thighs are poorly developed, and the chest girth is slender in keeping with the general development. In general the physical 144 characteristics are distinctly different from those of a typical West African Negro as represented by the Kru and the Ibo tribes.

The Ovimbundu are Bantu Negroes who possibly result from a crossing of Hamites and true Negroes, a hypothesis which would account for both the light-colored slim type and the shorter, darker, more sturdy type. But E. Torday (Herbert Spencer, Descriptive [114] Sociology of African Races, London, 1930, Preface, p. iii) thinks that differences of physique among Sudanic and Bantu Negroes are sufficiently accounted for by isolations and environmental differences. Torday denies the need for postulating an infusion of Hamitic blood, but his opinion is opposed to that which has found general acceptance.

The darker Ovimbundu with more facial hair may represent an infusion of Vachokue blood because there was warfare between the Ovimbundu and the Vachokue of eastern Angola with the result that some of the latter were taken as slaves. Types of the Ovimbundu are shown (Plates LII–LIV).

101 The Vasele, an Umbundu-speaking people of west-central Angola, 142 form a linguistic and cultural pocket because of their isolation in rugged country. Their physique shows no pronounced differences [304] from that of the Ovimbundu, but the methods of scarification, tooth mutilation, and personal ornament are in distinct contrast with those of the Ovimbundu. The Ovimbundu have only a V-shaped notch in the two upper central incisors, whereas the Vasele chip all their teeth to points (Plate LXXVI, Figs. 1, 2).

[302] The Luvando of southwest Angola resemble the Ovimbundu in general physique, though the great difference in hairdressing and personal ornament is likely to give a contrary impression (Plate LIX, Figs. 1, 2).

The Vaheneca are particularly well developed (Plate LXII, Figs. 1, 2). Not until Mongua is reached does one find a people who are distinctly different from the Ovimbundu in all respects. The Vakuanyama of Mongua are noticeably tall and slim, much taller and slimmer than the Ovimbundu, while their physiognomy is more refined (Plates LXIII; LXVIII, Fig. 2). The Vakuanyama are a pastoral tribe whereas the Ovimbundu are principally agricultural.

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The foregoing description applies to all bows collected in Elende, an Umbundu center; neither is there any appreciable difference between these bows and those of the Vachokue of the area from Cangamba to Saurimo in Lunda. The bows collected in the Vachokue region are on the average 10 cm longer than those collected at Elende, a structural difference probably connected with the heavier arrowheads used by the Vachokue (Plate XVII, Figs. 1–9).

The Vakuanyama of southern Angola make and use a bow which bears very little resemblance to those already described. The arrows, too, are entirely different from those used by the Ovimbundu and Vachokue.

The lengths of three bows collected at Mongua, a typical Kuanyama center, are 111, 123, and 123 cm. The bow stave, which is made from a monocotyledonous wood, is 5 cm broad in the widest part, while the cross section is a flattened ellipse. The bowstring is of twisted leather, looped at each end for slipping over the ends of the bow shaft (Plate XVII, Fig. 8).

According to L. S. B. Leakey (A New Classification of the Bow and Arrow in Africa, *J.R.A.I.*, LVI, 1926, pp. 259–294), the bows and arrows of Angola have not been studied. I am inclined to place the bows of the Ovimbundu and Vachokue with Leakey's "knotted string bows" (pp. 266–269).

Leakey states that the technique employed in stabilizing flight forms the best basis of classification of arrows, but so far as Angola is concerned, the shapes of arrowheads form a basis of classification according to locality. Ovimbundu, Vachokue, Vakuanyama, and Vasele, have distinctive patterns. Naturally there is borrowing of patterns where Ovimbundu and Vachokue intermingle, but, even so, there are distinguishing signs of Vachokue workmanship. The information respecting bows and arrows of Angola is best presented in paragraph form, and comparison of types is facilitated by reference to Plate XVII, Figs. 1–9.

The following arrows are used for killing birds:

(1) Elende. Ovimbundu boys use a wooden arrow with a heavy blunt head which is carved into five nodules (Plate XVII, Fig. 3). The head is tanged into a reed shaft and bound there with fine fiber covered with wax. The feathers are whole, bent over, and tied. The number of feathers varies considerably in different examples.

(2) Kipungo. The Vakipungo have a wooden-headed arrow with nine well-carved barbs (Plate XVII, Fig. 7). The head is socketed

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tribes, for everywhere these rites aim at securing ideas of unity, cooperation, conformity to tribal law, and admission to adult tribal life. 867 881

The methods used to achieve these aims are seclusion, circumcision, physical suffering, direct tuition, dancing, hunting, a change of name, and finally a ceremonial return to the tribe with adult status and the right to marry.

The following notes give details of ceremonies witnessed at three centers; namely, Katoko, Ngalangi, and Cangamba. For comparison of these rites with others performed in eastern Angola reference should be made to the books of A. Schachtzabel, and to the papers of H. Baumann (III), and F. and W. Jaspert, whose observations were made independently of each other and of my own investigation. 114 171 931

The dances of the novices at Katoko, where there is a mixed population of Ovimbundu, Vangangella, and Vachokue tribes, are part of the final ceremonies following circumcision and seclusion. The social group formed by this collective circumcision, seclusion, and dancing, is called *ocinguanji*, which is the name of the initiatory rites themselves. A boy who has been initiated is not allowed to become friendly with one who has not suffered the ceremony, and all boys who were circumcised at the same time preserve a sense of unity by dancing in a company and moving about together for twelve weeks after their return to the village from which they came. 881

Circumcision, which is prohibited by the Portuguese government, is still practised secretly in some regions. When circumcision is carried out by primitive methods serious infection may result from the lack of clean instruments, for the knife is, of course, unsterilized. 881 304

After the operation the patients are subjected to harsh treatment during the period of cure that follows. The circumcised are secluded in a wooded area. Food provided by the parents is placed on the bank of a river near which the initiation camp is built, and after the parents have gone away the boys bring their rations from the river to the camp. Before eating, the boys are obliged to give profuse thanks to the men who are acting as tutors. In some regions there is no food ration for the boys, and the rule is that each boy must subsist on what he is able to catch and collect with his hands.

Each boy has a male guardian who takes care of him after the operation. Those who have been operated upon are not permitted to wear clothes, nor are they allowed to warm themselves until quite healed. Any infraction of the rules results in a severe whipping.

short fiber skirts worn within this enclosure by the novices, are in agreement with the observations made at Cangamba. There is also a close resemblance between the independent accounts of H. Baumann and F. and W. Jaspert for the Vachokue, also P. A. Delille and E. de Jonghe for the southwest Congo.

The question of initiation rites, past and present, among people of pure Umbundu culture is important. The matter is more fully dealt with later in discussing cultural contacts and cultural losses, but there are a few points which should not be omitted here.

At Caconda, an Umbundu center of western Angola, Père R. P. Laagel stated that only two years ago he had visited an initiation camp of Ovimbundu boys in the hope of persuading them to return to his mission school at Caconda. My informant stated that the boys were circumcised, beaten, and confined to an enclosure for several weeks. Those who cried out when flogged received a double portion of blows. Poisoning is the fate of a boy who reveals the secrets of the initiation camp to women or uninitiated boys. This is the most direct testimony I have received concerning initiation rites among unmixed Ovimbundu.

From Bailundu and Elende I have obtained slight evidence of initiation rites. At the former place, which, like Elende, is a center of the Ovimbundu tribe, fiber costumes were obtained. The mask from Elende is unlike those used at Cangamba, Katoko, and Ngongo. The fiber suits are, however, no different from costumes used at these places. Initiation ceremonies are not held at Elende today, and beyond Dr. Ennis's statement that circumcision rites have been revived in the past fifteen years of his long residence in the neighborhood of Elende, I have no evidence of ritual.

The data relating to initiation of boys in Angola suggest loss of the initiatory rites from Umbundu culture, until only a few old masks and costumes, along with attenuated ritual, remain sporadically. On the contrary, in eastern Angola and particularly among the Vachokue, who are farther than the Ovimbundu from coastal influence, initiation ceremonies flourish. At present there is occurring a penetration of initiation rites from the Vachokue area into east-central Angola, which is a region of cultural admixture.

The foregoing pages have described certain institutions and social forces which collectively bring individuals into conformity with tribal standards of conduct. The influences at work in this direction may be direct or indirect.

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H. H. Johnston (A Comparative Study of the Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages, Oxford, 1919, vol. I, p. 350) places Umbundu in his Group X; that is, the southwestern group of Bantu languages. Johnston's map indicates that throughout Angola there is a gradual transition from the southwestern Bantu group to that of the southwest Congo, which is exactly what might be expected from a consideration of the geographical position of Angola. Johnston's grouping is based on root forms and vocabulary.

This difficulty of making a comparison of the affinities of Umbundu does not preclude the possibility of recording some preliminary observations, especially with regard to vocabulary.

F. and W. Jaspert have prepared a comparative vocabulary of 250 words in the languages of the Ovimbundu, the Luena, the Basongo, the Luchazi, the Luimbi, and the Vachokue tribes. Inspection of the columns indicates a close connection of Songo, Luchazi, and Luimbi; in fact, the vocabularies of the two latter are almost identical. The vocabularies of the Vachokue and the Luena have much in common with those mentioned, but the Umbundu vocabulary has only a minor agreement with the vocabularies of these eastern and northeastern tribes. There are, however, some words which are identical in all these languages mentioned by F. and W. Jaspert. Examples of identity, or very close similarity, are found in the words for "bow," "elephant," "to eat," "firestick," "finger," and a few other forms, but the principal deduction from inspection of the columns is the distinctiveness of the Umbundu vocabulary.

On the contrary, examination of the vocabularies of the Ovimbundu and the Vakuanyama, of the south of Angola, appears to justify Johnston's inclusion of Umbundu with southwestern Bantu in so far as similarity of vocabulary is a criterion. The correspondence is further borne out by P. H. Brincker's "Lehrbuch des Oshikuanyama." In the light of these comparisons the relationship of Umbundu vocabularies is readily seen, for instead of searching for similarities the numerous identities are at once evident. At a glance one sees that the Umbundu and Kuanyama words for "arm," "arrow," "ax," "banana," "beard," "bird," "blood," "bone," "breast," "charcoal," "guinea fowl," "hand," and "hoe," are either identical or closely related. I noted the easy communication of my Ovimbundu interpreter with the Vakuanyama of Mongua.

Some of the following chapters show that the Ovimbundu have an undeniable southwest Congo culture; they have, however, taken

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lion visits a village an old man talks to it through the palisade. The conversation is carried on in a series of grunts, after which the lion goes away. One of my informants said that "lions and leopards are watchdogs for old men who have died." When one of these animals kills a domestic animal or a person, the assumption is that the predatory animal was sent by a deceased old man who requires a sacrifice. Ngonga of Elende said that "when a lion killed a man it was a sign that there was a bad spirit from the man's family within the lion." There is divination to find who requires a sacrifice, since some ancestor has been neglected. W. C. Bell relates an Umbundu tale of a woman who changed herself into a wild animal, but I was not able to ascertain that belief in transformation is held today (*Jour. Amer. Folk-Lore*, XXXV, p. 129).

I am unable to prove that the Ovimbundu have definite ideas of the nature of a future life, but they certainly think of survival after death, and have clear concepts of good and bad spirits who influence the fortunes of the living. There is no idea of punishment or reward, but a bad man has a bad ghost which can do evil things. Spirits will follow their relations on earth; moreover, they will come to the house of bows where their property is preserved.

A man returning from a hunt with trophies, or from the collection of honey, will leave some of these on a grave. There is no idea of spirits in rivers and trees, but the first tree felled for building the house of a man of importance must not be allowed to fall violently. This may imply a belief in a tree-spirit.

Spirits move at night only and mentioning the dead by name or whistling at night calls spirits. There are many instances of sacrifice connected with the idea of a spirit who has to be appeased. The medicine-man can induce a spirit to enter an image of wood. Thus there are wooden images containing spirits useful to the blacksmith. There is an image which can show travelers the right path when the medicine-man consults it (Plate XXI, Figs. 3, 5).

Osande is a good spirit who will "bring good luck and do good things for the people, while *Ondele* is a bad spirit who harms the people," said Ngonga. When a person is sick, mad, or dizzy he has *Ondele*. Only a powerful *ocimbanda* can cast out *Ondele*. *Ocilulu* is the general name for a disembodied spirit, either good or bad. An *Ekisi* is an *Osande*; apparently the terms are synonymous.

A spirit can die a second time. There is, for instance, an evil bird of the night whose name is *Esuri*. This bird is able to catch a spirit in order to make it die a second death. A living person

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15). Fire is kindled on the grave and tended by a relative for thirty days (p. 38). 171

When the Masai desire rain, a fire of cordia wood is lighted. Into this a medicine-man throws charms, after which several medicine-men dance round the fire and sing (A. C. Hollis, The Masai, p. 348).

Bösch states that the Banyamwezi have a fire-making rite which is symbolic and religious, "mais avant tout il est magique." The new fire is made annually at the brewing of the first beer. New fire is made when epidemics of sickness occur, also at the inauguration of a new chief. The Ovimbundu make and distribute new fire on each of these occasions. The Banyamwezi strangle their decrepit king but do not announce the death. A report stating that the king is sick is issued (Les Banyamwezi, pp. 229–233).

The usages of the cattle-keeping Ovambo (of whom the Vakuanyama of southern Angola are a section) and the Herero, are of paramount importance in this research because of their proximity to the Ovimbundu.

H. Vedder (III, p. 156) has come to the conclusion that the Herero represent the southern extremity of a racial migration from the region of the Great Lakes, and this is the generally accepted view. Vedder states that the Herero came through the south of Angola, crossed the Cunene River, and entered the Kaokoveld (p. 166). From a study of native traditions, philology, and cultural elements, there is reason for supposing that the Ovambo, including the Vakuanyama, extended farther into Angola than they do today; hence contacts with the Ovimbundu were probably frequent, and possibly continuous for a period. 174 114

C. H. L. Hahn has recently made an analysis of the traits of Kuanyama culture. His introductory pages give an account of Kalunga, a supreme being whose name is coupled with the name Nangombe. There is here a philological resemblance to words used by the Ovimbundu. *Kalunga* is an Umbundu word meaning "greetings," "sea," "lord," and "death," the meaning varying with the context and accent. *Ongombe* is the Umbundu word for ox, while *Kongombe* is the name of more than one chief of historical importance. The Herero respect a supreme being whom they call Ndjambi Karunga. *Njambi* is a well-known word in the Congo region, and the Ovimbundu have the word *Njambi*, or *Na-Njambi*, which means "Lord Njambi."

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174 114 The Ovambo will not allow the tribal fire of the chief's kraal to burn out because it is the life of the people (Hahn, p. 3). This author writes in the past tense, from which one infers that the customs he describes have declined. Two old men were the keepers of the sacred fire; these guardians were chosen from the circumcised men (p. 17). The fire was never allowed to flare, but only to smolder. No one referred to this fire, nor was anyone allowed to sit near it, cook over it, or warm himself. The whole tribe received the fire from the chief, who originally gave it to the headman for distribution to commoners (p. 18). Hahn remarks that, although these customs are declining, they are still observed by the Vakuanyama, the branch of the Ovambo which is in closest contact with the Ovimbundu.

171 In the same publication (III, p. 68) Vedder says of the Berg Damara that a series of religious ideas centers in the holy fire which burns perpetually on the eastern side of a sacred tree in the middle of each village. At this fire the elders cook their meat, and here the council meeting is held. In order to obtain a seat at the holy fire a young man has to submit to initiation as a hunter on three occasions, at intervals of a year. Children may not play at the holy fire. When hunting becomes unprofitable the Berg Damara move to a new site, and a glowing piece of wood is taken from the sacred fire in order to kindle a new one. This is the practice described in connection with the formation of a new village site by the Ovimbundu. A more detailed account of sacred fire is given by Vedder (II, pp. 23–27).

L. Fourie, another contributor to "Native Tribes of Southwest Africa," shows that the Heikom Bushmen have a sacred fire kindled and owned by the headman, who is the only person who knows how to bring from this fire the properties which induce health and well-being. When making a new settlement the headman kindles the new fire under the sacred tree, and fire from the old camp may not be used. After the headman has dropped herbs into the fire and has lighted his pipe therefrom, his wife takes brands for kindling the fire in her hut. The fire is then distributed from this point among the whole group (p. 87).

The center for religious worship among the Herero is an ash heap in which a weak fire glimmers. This is blown into a blaze only on festive occasions. The fire is always situated between the chief kraal and the house of the principal wife. Round the fire lie horns of cattle which have been slaughtered as an offering (Vedder, III, p. 167). The holy fire is a gift from Mukuru, and extinction of

XI. WIDER CULTURE CONTACTS

171 121 When dealing with the immediate culture contacts of the Ovimbundu, the traits found in central Angola were considered in relation to the cultural elements of each of three areas, the Congo basin, Rhodesia, and South West Africa. In this chapter attention is given to some traits that are found, not only among the Ovimbundu and adjacent peoples, but among some other African tribes remote from the present-day location of the Ovimbundu. The Graebnerian school has indeed claimed that some of these widely distributed African traits are Melanesian and Indonesian in origin, a theory which is briefly considered in the latter part of this chapter.

• 114 The present examination of widely distributed traits is facilitated by referring to each of a number of papers not previously mentioned. For example, E. Torday (IV) has dealt in general with religion and social organization among Bantu tribes. H. Baumann (II) has discussed hoe-culture and matriarchal conditions in Bantu Africa. G. Lindblom (I) has brought together a large body of evidence relating to the distribution of hunting devices. H. Balfour (I, II, III) has outlined the distribution of the friction drum. Hence there exist useful summaries of trait distributions with which cultural factors of the Ovimbundu can be compared.

Antiquity of Cultural Traits

171 At the outset we must recognise that the extent of distribution of a trait and its importance in the cultural pattern may be but a treacherous guide to its antiquity. The widespread use and cultivation of tobacco and maize are instances of this kind. The growth and curing of tobacco led to the adoption of this commodity as a medium of exchange which could be conveniently carried by caravans. Exchange of snuff as a form of greeting, also the passing of a communal pipe from hand to hand in the men's house, are instances of social usages which caused a rapid spread of a commodity in a short time (Laufer, Hambly, and Linton, Tobacco and Its Uses in Africa, Field Mus. Nat. Hist., Anthr. Leaflet 29, 1929).

The use of maize, one of the most important factors in the building and preservation of Umbundu culture, has a wide distribution in Africa, but its introduction is dated only from the sixteenth century. The Portuguese carried on a regular traffic in slaves between Angola and Brazil, and in all probability this resulted in the introduction of manioc, peanuts, and sweet potatoes. Possibly

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171 organization and artifacts have been described in relation to a wide cultural background in Negro Africa. There remains, however, the more difficult problem of a possible introduction of some of these cultural traits from regions outside the continent of Africa itself.

KULTURKREIS THEORY

174 114 Our investigation is able to account for the occurrence of certain widely distributed traits which the Ovimbundu possess, either in their common form or in some specialized aspect. The broader problem of the possible origin of African traits in Melanesia and Indonesia is one that should not be neglected.

The kulturkreis theory as expounded by Graebner (Methode der Ethnologie, Heidelberg, 1911) has been applied to Africa by B. Ankermann (*Zeitsch. Ethn.*, 1905, pp. 62–90). Frobenius has expressed his views in "Der Ursprung der afrikanischen Kulturen," Leipzig, 1894; "Das unbekannte Afrika," Munich, 1923; and the "Atlas afrikanus," Munich, 1922.

An article of Frobenius (Smithsonian Institution Reports, 1898, pp. 638–647) summarizes the Graebnerian thesis so far as Africa is concerned. Frobenius says that the Malayo-Negritan relationship of African culture is established. Certain cultural elements appear together and are equally distributed. Ethnographical objects illustrative of phases of culture may be examined with a view to fixing their descent, just as we examine the limbs and organs of a living being, and the theory is concerned with morphological considerations in particular.

Frobenius states (p. 639), that he is concerned with studying the genealogical tree of culture forms, and as a first example he chooses wooden drums which are found in the Congo basin and lower Guinea; these drums are said to be of Malayo-Negritan origin. The next example chosen is that of the Malayo-Negritan bow. Wooden shields of Africa with reed covering have related forms in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Pile dwellings are found in Dahomey and among the Ambuella; also in New Guinea. Chairs and neck rests used by many Negro tribes are of Oceanic form. There is a Malayo-Negritan affinity of bark fabrics of Africa with the well-known tapa cloth of Oceania (p. 644). The "likeness of anatomical origin, coupled with the outlined area of distribution, is evidence not to be gainsaid" (p. 645). The culture of a fishing community is on all sides characterized by mesh work. In New Guinea the net is used as clothing, and in the whole of west Africa we

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hear of the netted jerseys of the disguised. The matriarchate is possibly to be classed among Malayo-Negritan characteristics, in particular when accompanied by exogamy. So runs the Graebnerian argument.

To these cultural factors from Melanesia Frobenius adds the gora, which he compares with a form from New Pommern. He also mentions the marimba; tobacco-pipes of the Ituri region, which are likened to those of New Guinea; and the scarification of the Bashilange, which has some circular characters said to be like Maori moko. The prows of canoes in Dualla (Cameroon) are compared with those of the Admiralty Islands.

The factors of Asiatic culture which have affected northern Africa are more readily accepted because of known historical contacts of a continuous-kind over geographically contiguous regions. Probably Frobenius is right in attributing the drum with a pottery base, chain armor, quilted armor, the long knife, and the stringed instrument rubaba, to Asiatic sources. The round shields of northeast Africa may be accepted as of Asiatic origin. These points, though part of the general theory, do not concern our study of the Ovimbundu, who do not possess these alleged Asiatic traits.

The supposed line of migration of Malayo-Negritan culture up the Zambezi valley, thence along the Sankuru into the Congo basin and so to Cameroon and farther west Africa, presents no great obstacle, but the hypothesis lacks a coordination of cultural elements and a historico-psychological explanation.

In considering several Indonesian factors such as those mentioned by R. Linton as occurring in Madagascar (*Amer. Anth.*, 1928, pp. 372–389), and while regarding the evidence of J. Hornell (*Man*, 1928, No. 1) respecting the similarity of canoes on Lake Victoria Nyanza and along the coast with those from Java, there is no difficulty in admitting impacts from Indonesia. There is, however, only the beginning of a hypothesis in these comparisons.

The construction of a theory purporting to show phylogenetic connection between cultures as remote as those of Sierra Leone and Melanesia still requires elaboration. At the present time there is not sufficient detail available for the filling in of distribution maps purporting to show the line of migration of this postulated Malayo-Negritan culture. But according to Graebnerian views a hiatus merely means that the intrusive culture has disappeared.

The question arises respecting evidence from Angola which may favor or refute the validity of a Malayo-Negritan origin of some

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174 culture elements of Negro Africa. Among the cultural traits of
114 the Ovimbundu are a few which the Graebnerians would claim as evidence of the passage of Indonesian cultural waves. Use of the bow is part of the bow culture. Matriarchal conditions and hoe-culture by women would be regarded as a somewhat later wave of culture. Frobenius would ascribe the use of netted clothing during initiation to an Oceanic origin. There is a small area in southeast Angola where pile dwellings are built by the Ambuella tribe. Bark cloth is made in eastern Angola. The marimba and the musical bow are traits of Umbundu and Oceanic culture.

The point at issue seems to be the acceptance or rejection of cultural contacts on the ground of alleged resemblance in forms. Frobenius would doubtless add that the supposed Malayo-Negritan factors in Umbundu culture lie only a little to the southwest of the Zambezi, which is a main line of hypothetical migration of Malayo-Negritan factors.

Each of these elements of Umbundu culture is of a non-specific kind. For example, there is nothing about the bark cloth, except that it is a bark cloth, to link it with similar material in any other part of the world. Stripping the tree, soaking the bark and beating it, are part of the general technique.

The musical bow has a wide distribution, as H. Balfour (1) has shown. He studies the distribution in Africa, North and South America, Asia, India, the Malay Archipelago, Melanesia, and Polynesia. He postulates the derivation from the archers' bow and says (p. 85), "The question whether or no we are to regard the musical bows in India and in Africa as belonging to one family, is one which is difficult to answer." Balfour is impressed with similarity of forms in India and Africa, but feels that the common origin is not demonstrable.

When comparing types of masks and costumes within the African continent itself the work of Frobenius (1) is found to be useful in indicating areas over which certain types of regalia are used in initiation ceremonies. There is undoubtedly a localization of types, and we previously noted that Angolan forms of masks and costumes are definitely like those of the Bakuba and the Baluba in the southwest Congo region. Moreover, the netting costumes used by the Ovimbundu and the Vachokue of Angola closely resemble those used in some parts of the Congo basin, Cameroon, and from that point westward to Sierra Leone. Therefore, so long as comparisons are

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limited to Africa itself, they are instructive in showing cultural traits of Angola against a broader background.

But if the inquiry is extended with a view to proving that African masks and costumes are derivatives from Oceania, there exists no acceptable evidence of generic relationship. The mere use of fiber skirts, of netting suits, and of bark cloth for masks, is not acceptable evidence for supporting a theory of derivation of African from Oceanic forms.

More important than the study of forms is the psychological background of masks and costumes in Africa and Melanesia. In "Origins of Education" I made a comparison of factors included in the initiation of boys in Africa and Melanesia. The boys are secluded, circumcised, instructed, harshly treated, and after a change of name are reintroduced to their villages at a dance in which masks and costumes are used.

Waiving the question of similarity of masks and costumes, do the psychological factors provide reasonable grounds for assuming generic relationship of initiation customs? Possibly the psychological setting suggests a single origin, but the matter is so largely subjective, that a decision cannot be made without further evidence of the correlation of forms, the details underlying their origin and use, and the establishment of a more definite and unbroken track of distribution. To have an intuition and a vague hypothesis is very different from the demonstration of a theory. Delafosse (Negroes of Africa, p. 3) pictures the peopling of Africa by Negro impacts from Asia on the east coast near Madagascar. If true, this suggestion would support the views of the Graebnerian school, but the theory is highly speculative.

The extent to which an observer may be misled by fortuitous resemblances in form has been demonstrated by a number of American anthropologists. Every investigator who attempts comparative study and classification is prone to unite concepts, customs, and artifacts which have only a superficial and misleading resemblance to one another. This failure to discriminate may be illustrated as follows: R. H. Lowie (Plains Indian Age-Societies, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., Anth. Papers, No. 11, pp. 883-961) has shown the fallacy of assuming genuine cultural resemblances between Age-Societies of Plains Indians, the Masai, and the Melanesians, because the phenomena when analyzed prove to have different psychological settings, and they are structurally as distinct as are their geographical areas.

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174 114 W. D. Wallis points out the care that should be exercised in assessing the evidential values of culture traits. These should be weighted according to their simplicity or complexity, and their logical connection with one another (*Amer. Anth.*, XXX, p. 94). The cultural factors of the Malayo-Negritan migration have not been considered in the manner advocated by Wallis.

Lowie examined apparently similar cases of exogamy, but found that these depended on different conditions; for example, exogamy might depend on either clan or locality (The Principle of Convergence in Ethnology, *Jour. Amer. Folk-lore*, XXV, pp. 24–42).

A. A. Goldenweiser shows that totemism has many social and psychological interpretations differing greatly according to locality. In order to include the many forms of totemism a broad definition has to be accepted. Totemism is indeed nothing more than a tendency of social units or individuals to become associated with symbols of emotional value (Totemism an Analytical Study, *Jour. Amer. Folk-lore*, XXIII).

Lowie further emphasizes the distinctive types of totemism, in order to show the fallacy of linking many different concepts under one term, without recognizing the broad significance of the term (*Amer. Anth.*, XIII, p. 189). This research shows Frobenius to be at fault in merely noting the presence of totemism and other traits without defining their forms and examining the psychological background.

An article by A. L. Kroeber and C. Holt (Masks and Moieties as a Culture Complex, *J.R.A.I.*, L, p. 452) has a special bearing on Graebnerian views with regard to the spread of cultures. Kroeber set out to test the validity of the statement that North American culture had been affected by the east Papuan layer of the Graebnerian culture stream, which was supposed to have brought masks and moieties to North America. The Graebnerian method assumes that a culture trait never develops twice; also that instances of geographical isolation of a trait must be ascribed to migration and subsequent loss in intervening areas. The conclusion of Kroeber, based on statistical examination of instances of conjoint occurrence of the two traits, indicates that the union of masks and moieties comes out fortuitously.

R. B. Dixon indicates several factors to which attention should be paid in making comparisons of culture traits (*Science*, XXXV, p. 46). In the first place there is the question of relationship on geographical and historical grounds. It is also important to know

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what degree of complexity there is in the artifacts and beliefs which are under comparison. Reason and form, that is, psychology and morphology, are both important aspects of comparison. The work so far accomplished with regard to the Malayo-Negritan theory of African cultural traits fails to comply with the foregoing essentials of comparative study.

There is consensus of opinion against the Graebnerian hypothesis in its present form. E. S. Hartland reviews Graebner's "Methode der Ethnologie" (*Man*, 1914, No. 70) with the result that he finds Graebner too insistent on the value of forms as a criterion of generic relationship. In fact such a method may degenerate into pure subjectivity. F. Boas (*Science*, XXXIV, No. 884) takes the same point of view in remarking on the exclusion of the psychological field of inquiry; Graebner's method has a too mechanical character.

In view of this criticism, and as a result of personal observation of the culture elements of Angola, I am convinced that the somatological, linguistic, and cultural data for considering the spread of the Malayo-Negritan culture in Africa are not sufficiently understood to lead to a demonstration of any kind. For instance, Portuguese East Africa, the hypothetical starting point of the migration, is by no means well studied in detail, and the problem demands that data relating to the supposed area of introduction should be particularly complete.

The same criticism relates to the farthest point of west Africa reached by the supposed cultural stream from Melanesia. A theory which aims at showing generic relationship between secret societies of west Africa and Oceania cannot successfully rely only on general resemblances of masks and the use of netting costumes. Something more specific than a comparison of forms of artifacts and the occurrence of such ill-defined institutions as age-grades, totemism, and secret societies is essential in order to make the kulturkreis theory acceptable.

The problem of cultural relationships between the Ovimbundu and other African tribes is simplified in several ways. Geographical continuity exists between the African areas discussed, and to a great extent the cultural contacts described are matters of historical fact. Data relating to the Ovimbundu themselves are fairly complete; and what is equally important, there is trustworthy literature bearing on the areas surrounding the Ovimbundu. Therefore, comparisons do not rest on the study of a few simple forms, but on the cultures taken as a whole with regard to cultural traits of all kinds.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

XII. CULTURAL PROCESSES

Analysis of African Cultures

The difficulties of making a study of the Ovimbundu in their relation to a general background of African cultures are connected with unsolved problems of archaeology, physical anthropology, linguistic study, and the history of cultural traits. 172

With the exception of data from Algeria, Egypt, Kenya, and south Africa there is a paucity of archaeological information which might determine the antiquity of past cultures, the relation of these to past and present races, and the routes by which races and cultures traveled. In the regions mentioned systematic excavations are in progress, but for the greater part of Africa archaeologists have no knowledge of the relative antiquity of stone implements found on the surface.

African ethnologists are not consistent in the connotations of terms such as Bantu and Hamitic. The word Bantu primarily refers to a linguistic family of Negroes, but a Bantu Negro culture exists with many divisions, and later we shall see that a somatological concept is associated with the word Bantu. The word Hamitic may describe a linguistic family, a series of physical traits differing from those which characterize the Negro, and a type of pastoral culture in which all the activities and beliefs of tribal life center in the keeping of cattle. The adjective Semitic can also be used to denote a well-defined linguistic family, a type of culture, or somatic traits. But the Semitic problem does not concern us since the Ovimbundu have no traits that could be associated with Semitic culture, either Mohammedan or pre-Koranic; with the possible exception of blood brotherhood by exchange of blood, and the use of a scapegoat (Robertson Smith, Lectures on the Religion of the Semites, p. 296; Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia, pp. 57, 61). 171

The comparative studies of physical anthropologists are retarded by paucity of skeletal material both ancient and modern, while series of measurements on living subjects, especially women, are inadequate in relation to the great size of Africa and the complexity of the problems which arise from comparative study of anatomical data. 144 114

Darwin's "Descent of Man" recognized the possibility of man's origin in Africa, and the recent excavations of L. S. B. Leakey in Kenya may finally prove that the oldest remains of *Homo sapiens*

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbunda FP13

114 are within the African continent (Stone Age Cultures of Kenya, 144 Cambridge, England, 1931). H. H. Johnston concludes that the place of origin of the African Negro is unknown. A. C. Haddon (The Wandering of Peoples, p. 54) surmises that "there is reason to believe that all the main races reached Africa from Asia." G. Sergi (The Mediterranean Race, pp. 41–42) regards the Hamites as a single human stock, but disagrees with a theory of Asiatic origin, and postulates the origin of Hamites in northeast Africa.

C. G. Seligman summarizes the views of Sergi and other writers respecting the origin of Hamites (Races of Africa, pp. 96–156). Among the eastern Hamites cranial characteristics, though variable, are generally convergent and are to be regarded as old variations of an original stock. Apart from Negro admixture the face of the Hamite is never prognathous. The nose is straight. The lips are often thick but never everted as in the Negro. The hair is often frizzly, but sometimes wavy or almost straight. The color of the skin varies; it may be yellowish, coppery red-brown, through every shade of brown to black, according to the amount of miscegenation that has taken place. Seligman states "that the Hamitic cradleland is generally agreed to be Asiatic, perhaps southern Arabia, or possibly an area farther east. Be this as it may, there is no doubt that the Hamites and Semites must be regarded as modifications of an original stock" (Some Aspects of the Hamitic Problem in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, *J.R.A.I.*, XLIII, pp. 593–705).

As a result of research in the north Arabian desert Henry Field states that the stony desert between Transjordania and the Euphrates River was probably well watered and fertile at an unknown period. The locality may have been a focus, first of concentration, then of dispersal. Archaeological evidence arising from a comparative study of stone implements from Arabia and east Africa, together with data of physical anthropology, and the basic unity of Semitic and Hamitic languages support a theory of Hamitic intrusion from Asia (H. Field, The Cradle of Homo Sapiens, *Amer. Jour. Arch.*, XXXVI, No. 4, pp. 426–430; The Antiquity of Man in Southwestern Asia, *Amer. Anth.*, XXXV, pp. 51–62).

144 Although the origin of Hamites and Negroes is obscure it has 142 been possible to give a summary of the chief physical traits of the former, and the same can be done for the latter. Typical Sudanic-speaking Negroes, who are sometimes referred to as "true Negroes," are to be seen in the Ibo and Ijaw tribes of southern Nigeria, and among the Kru of Liberia. The characteristics of the Negro are a

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

heavy torso, disproportionately long arms, a dark skin, prognathous jaws, broad nostrils, thick everted lips, and woolly-hair. But usually a modification of these features occurs in Bantu-speaking Negroes. How did this modification of physique arise?

A. C. Haddon (Wandering of Peoples, p. 54) expresses a generally accepted view when he states that Bantu-speaking Negroes are a mixture of true Negroes with Hamites. Seligman (Races of Africa, p. 181) refers to an infusion of Hamitic blood which has differentiated the Bantu Negroes from true Negroes, and this is a generally accepted hypothesis. But Torday (H. Spencer, Descriptive Sociology of African Races, preface, p. iii) questions whether the physical and linguistic cleavage between Bantu-speaking and Sudanic-speaking Negroes is due to an admixture of Hamitic blood. He attributes the physical differences of the two great linguistic divisions of Negroes to disparity of environmental conditions. But at present no physical anthropologist could say to what extent climatic factors, nutrition, and other environmental conditions can be held responsible for the physical differences of Negroes.

The question of a mingling of Hamite and true Negro to produce a modified type of Negro is not the only difficulty. How does one account for aberrant Negroid types such as the Pygmies of the Ituri forest and the Bushmen? They have a phylogenetic relationship, but what is the racial affinity? Again, will change of environmental conditions account for the Pygmy and Bushman types? Or are we to form a hypothesis of origins by assuming establishment of new species by variation or mutation?

In the absence of certain knowledge science accepts a hypothesis which best explains the known facts. And in this matter of a modified Negro type speaking Bantu languages, the idea of a mingling of the blood of Negroes and Hamites best explains the gradation of physical types from west African, Sudanic-speaking Negroes, through various types of Bantu Negroes, to Hamites, as exemplified by the Somali, Beja, and Hadendoa.

The main characters of linguistic families of Africa are clearly defined by A. Werner (Language Families of Africa, pp. 20–23) who refers to the works of D. Westermann and C. Meinhof. The distinguishing features of Hamitic, Semitic, Bantu, Sudanic, and Bushman speech are known, yet the task of placing a particular language in its appropriate family is not always simple. The classification may depend on the particular facet of the language which is under examination. Hausa (Hamitic), is difficult to classify

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

since the language has Sudanic and Hamitic elements with some Semitic roots. The earliest relationships of African linguistic families, for instance Hamitic and Semitic, also Sudanic, Bantu, and Bushman, is a field for further research. To take only one instance of complexity, Bantu is divided into more than two hundred languages and innumerable dialects, whose origin, structure, and evolution have been treated by C. Meinhof (Introduction to the Phonology of the Bantu Languages, London, 1932; a translation, by A. Werner and N. J. von Warmelo, of Meinhof's Grundriss eine Lautlehre der Bantusprachen).

In conclusion of this summary of the background of African history, there arises the difficulty of ascribing to each of the races those cultural elements for which the race is responsible, either by primary invention within Africa, or by introduction from some source outside Africa. The difficulty may be illustrated by quotations relating to the iron industry of African Negroes. Rival theories claim origin of the craft in Asia, in Egypt, and among African Negroes themselves.

Seligman (Races of Africa, p. 158) states, "We may believe that the Negro, who is now an excellent iron worker, learnt this art from the Hamite." Torday writes (H. Spencer, Descriptive Sociology of African Races, preface, p. iii), "To state that Bantu civilization—or any civilization whatever—is due to the ancestors of such absolutely primitive tribes as the Hadendoa and Beja (identified by some with the enigmatic Hamites) presupposes that these people who were ignorant of agriculture, or the production of iron, and of all arts and crafts denoting a higher culture, who, as we know, have not progressed a step within the past five hundred years and considered all manual labor degrading, had the power to give that which they never possessed."

The complexity of argument relating to the origin of just one cultural trait, iron-working, can be judged by consulting the writings of W. Gowland (The Metals in Antiquity, *J.R.A.I.*, XLII, pp. 235–287), W. M. F. Petrie (The Arts and Crafts of Ancient Egypt), W. Belck (Die Erfinder der Eisentechnik, *Zeitsch. Ethn.*, XXXIX, pp. 335–381; XL, pp. 45–69; XLII, pp. 15–30), and F. Luschan (Eisentechnik in Afrika, *ibid.*, XLI, pp. 23–59).

Even with these reservations and disputed points in mind, it is yet possible to speculate with some accuracy respecting the origin and assembly of traits which, welded together, form the culture of the Ovimbundu.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

I cannot find in the life of the Ovimbundu anything to support the opinion of W. C. Willoughby. This writer sees in the soul of every race an instinct for god that tells upon behavior, an upward urge that makes for betterment, due to the unwearied play of the spirit of god on the souls of man. The views of E. Torday and R. J. van Wing (Dualism in Western Bantu Religion and Social Organization, *J.R.A.I.*, XLVIII, p. 225) seem to be more applicable to the spiritual beliefs of the Ovimbundu.

The Ovimbundu have standards of conduct, codes of laws, crimes, and punishments. In addition to the *ekandu* (antisocial acts) already noted, *ohembi* is a liar, *okusapa* means to be greedy, and such actions are deprecated; but there is no deistic injunction toward the virtues of truthfulness, hospitality, and fair dealing.

Standards of conduct and social values are preserved by the educational forces previously mentioned (chapter VII), and in addition to these there are such controls as trial by ordeal, and divination to detect guilt. The satirical song is also a form of correction, though its application may be antisocial, for instance in taunting the sexually impotent.

Music and dancing are adjuncts for the preservation of social customs and the stimulation of collective emotions on which cooperation depends. Music and dancing are also aids to magical practices. For example, a friction drum is played while a medicine-man carries out his divination with the basket, and vigorous drumming takes place during treatment of the sick. Music and dancing were again seen to be of importance at a funeral ceremony.

These instances, which are chosen from many of like kind reported in the foregoing chapters, serve to indicate an interrelationship among the main aspects of tribal life. I have endeavored to choose from personal experience those facts and incidents which illustrate the mutual dependence of language, folklore, proverbs, nature lore, food supply, and occupations.

The sexual division of labor, the connection of ceremonial with occupation, the relationship of the sexes, and the position of woman, have all been brought forward as examples of social controls.

The persistence of belief and custom despite foreign influences; the nature of government, including the psychology of prestige and leadership; spiritual beliefs; the training of children; and the value of music and dancing, have likewise been emphasized as coordinating

4:Dorsey E-4, 5 (no date)1899 FP13 Mbundu FP13

THE OCIMBANDA, OR WITCH-DOCTOR OF THE OVIMBUNDU OF PORTUGUESE SOUTHWEST AFRICA.

● 114 In July of last year the Anthropological Department of the Field Columbian Museum secured an ethnological collection from the Ovimbundu of the Portuguese African province of Angola. The collection was made by Rev. T. W. Woodside, a missionary for seven years among the Ovimbundu, and, on account of its completeness and the full data which accompanied the objects, is of unusual importance and value. Perhaps of chief interest among the series [121] of objects illustrating the various phases of native life in this region is the complete "medicine chest" of a witch-doctor. This I shall describe, making free use of the extensive notes furnished by Mr. Woodside, supplemented by several conversations during which the objects themselves were discussed, and much information furnished concerning the Ovimbundu in general. The collection under consideration was obtained from a single individual, and has seen long use.

101 The Ovimbundu are a southern division of an extensive group of people known as the Bundas, who, in turn, belong to the group of Bantu populations. They occupy the territory of the Bailundu and Bihe plateaus, from Bengualla to the Quanza River, a table-land 4000 to upwards of 6000 feet high, and in south latitude about twelve 142 degrees. The Ovimbundu are described by Mr. Woodside as a dark-skinned people, varying from coffee-brown to quite black, with thick curly hair. They are entirely uncivilized, but are a peaceable, 105 kindly people. Their food is chiefly vegetal, although they possess cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and chickens. They practise polygamy, and the women prepare the food and do nearly all the field work. The men are famous as traders, and journey to the interior for rubber, wax, ivory, and slaves; the latter they secure by purchase from the country of the Lubas. The principal medium of exchange is a cheap cotton cloth which is obtained from white travellers.

791 Among the Ovimbundu, as in nearly all parts of Africa, the 759 witch-doctor is an important personage. He is feared by all classes, and often has more influence and power than the chief himself. Whenever anything is lost or stolen, they apply to the witch-doctor to find out where the object is, or who is the thief. As no one is [761] supposed to die a natural death, the doctor is called in to discover the witch who caused the death. To him they go for all kinds of charms to protect themselves against all evils, or to cast a spell on some one whom they wish to injure; to him they also go for help in

5: Hambly E-5 (1929-30)1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

OCCUPATIONAL RITUAL, BELIEF, AND CUSTOM AMONG THE OVIMBUNDU

By WILFRID DYSON HAMBLY

[114] WHEN leader of the Frederick H. Rawson-Field Museum Expedition of 1929–30 one of my chief objects was the assembling of a representative collection of the arts and handicrafts of Angola, and particularly of the Ovimbundu who occupy the Benguela highlands.

[177] The Ovimbundu have been in contact with Europeans for three centuries at least, therefore I was interested to know to what extent daily avocations had become secularized. That a close connection has existed between the sacred and the profane in Negro tribes is well known, and the influence of spiritual beliefs and magical acts in every department of economic life, including agriculture, hunting, fishing, and handicrafts, has been established. But how durable is this dependence of economic life on magical acts and ancestral benediction? How soon does primitive economic life become commercialized on a European pattern?

Other observations of academic interest and practical value relate to division of labor between the sexes, specialization by age and natural aptitude; also the possibility of some callings being of an hereditary nature.

[101] My observations, which were made chiefly in the regions of Bailundu, Elende near Cuma, and Ngalangi, are conveniently classified under the headings of food supply, handicrafts, medicine-men, and education.

FOOD SUPPLY

824 825 At the foundation of economic life is nature lore, which among the male population of the Ovimbundu is so detailed and extensive that the knowledge has given rise to a large vocabulary. The highly specialized acquaintance with trees, plants, birds, mammals, and reptiles on the part of most of the men was a surprise to me. Such information was commonly shared by males, and was in no way peculiar to the professional hunter.

I was easily able to collect a list of fifty birds which are readily distinguished by boys (who shoot them with blunt wooden arrows), and all men seemed familiar with forty species of trees, whose timbers, barks, and fruits were distinguished and named. Boys were exceptionally well acquainted with small mammals; including several kinds of rats and mice, which are trapped, boiled, and eaten. For Field Museum I made a collection of snakes and lizards; a task which again showed the native power of observation and adequacy of vocabulary. Some reptiles, whose re-

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
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INTRODUCTION

The Ovimbundu[1] of central Angola appear under various names[2] in narratives by nineteenth and early twentieth century travellers in West Central Africa. In the present century three anthropological studies have been written about them by Childs,[3] Hambly,[4] and Hastings,[5] as well as two shorter studies by Bastos[6] and Santos Brandao,[7] and a large number of articles.[8] Despite the large amount of documentation available there existed a considerable number of gaps, especially as regards the political system and the kinship system.[9] In proposing to work among the Ovimbundu, I hoped to be able to fill in these gaps, and in particular to provide a study of what appeared to be a double-descent kinship system. I also hoped to study the reactions of an African society to Portuguese rule.

I arrived at Nova Lisboa in roughly the centre of Umbundu country in October 1955. Here, as in Lisbon, I was told that it would be very difficult to find an area where the traditional social life of the Ovimbundu as described in the literature

[1] A plural from the singular Otjimbundu. The adjective and the name of the language is Umbundu. The Ovimbundu people are entirely distinct from the Kimbundu people of northern Angola and the two languages are not mutually intelligible. However, the confusion between the two has gone so far that both Europeans and Africans speak of the Ovimbundu people and language as Kimbundu and of the true Kimbundu as Kamundongo.

[2] Mambari, Nano, Ovimbali, and so on.

[3] G. M. Childs, *Umbundu Kinship and Character*, Oxford, 1949.

[4] W. D. Hambly, *The Ovimbundu of Angola*, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, 1934.

[5] *Ovimbundu Customs and Practices* (unpublished thesis) 1933, D. A. Hastings.

[6] Traços Geraes sobre a Etnografia do Districto de Benguella in *Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa*, 1908, pp. 3–13, 44–58, 81–99, 133–40, 169–76, 197–207.

[7] Articles in *Mensário Administrativo* (Luanda) March–April, July–August 1950, and Sept.–Oct., Nov.–Dec. 1952.

[8] See Bibliography.

[9] For an examination of the ethnographic material as it then was, see Merran McCulloch, *The Ovimbundu of Angola*, Ethnographic Survey of Africa. International African Institute, London, 1952.

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6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
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could be observed. Eventually I decided to work in the Bimbe area, in the extreme north-western corner of Umbundu country. The census[10] indicated that Bimbe had a smaller white population than any comparable area of Umbundu country, and people who knew it considered that it was one of the areas most likely to retain a relatively conservative social life.

In Bimbe I settled in the village of Epalanga in the chiefdom of Gumba. The advantage of Gumba lay in the conservatism for which its people were noted in other chiefdoms; its disadvantage lay in its proximity to the northern boundary of Umbundu speech and culture, which led me to collect some items of ethnographic information not typical of Umbundu country.[11] On the whole, I am satisfied that the people of Gumba were in the past as in the present Ovimbundu in both speech and way of life.[12]

Many of my discoveries were at first negative ones. I could not find any evidence that there was a double system of kinship groups actually in existence; the villages were not composed of agnatic kin; the chief seemed lacking in power. Nor was it easy to obtain detailed information about the past even from old men. There is little interest nowadays in history, nor are the old social institutions regarded, even by those who once participated in them, as being necessarily better than those of the present day. The reason for this attitude seems to lie in Umbundu social psychology with its readiness to accept European authority and values. Interesting as the motivations behind this attitude are, this 'cultural amnesia' caused me much disappointment. I found it much easier to get texts on the caravan trade, and on ceremonial practices and proverbs, than on the political and kinship systems. The inadequacies of the information I received on the political system may be explained by the fact that Gumba is on the fringe of the area tributary to the old kingdom of

[10] Of 1950.

[11] The payment of fines by a man to his dead wife's kin had been formerly practised in Gumba, and still is further north. It does not seem to have been known in living memory elsewhere in Umbundu country.

[12] The northern limit of Umbundu speech is now somewhere to the north of the administrative post of Cela. As there has not been substantial migration from the south, it is reasonable to assume that it is many years since the Gumba-Cela boundary was also the language boundary.

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rather than any political alliance or opposition, which related the Ovimbundu as a whole to the Portuguese and the other tribes. Informants who remember 'the time of the rubber' talk about it with much more interest and much more detail than about any other aspect of the past, and it is far easier to make an ordered picture out of the narratives of the caravan journeys than to fill in the gaps in the descriptions of the political and kinship systems provided by Childs and Hastings.[17]

Politically the Ovimbundu were divided, as has been said, into several kingdoms. Bailundo, the largest of the kingdoms was divided, according to Childs into about 200 sub-chiefdoms. As it had about half a million inhabitants this would give an average population of about 2,500. While the kingdoms seem to have been more or less stable in number and boundaries from the end of the eighteenth century, the number of sub-chiefdoms seems to have increased. Thus an official Portuguese estimate made in 1799 gives Bailundo as having only 82 sub-chiefdoms, and Galangue, where Childs counted 112 sub-chiefdoms, as having 78. The sub-chiefdom paid tribute to the king, sent men for his armies, and recognized his court as the supreme arbitrator. Some sub-chiefdoms were held by ministers or relatives of the king.[18]

It is, however, not easy on the sparse detail available to decide how much autonomy the sub-chiefdoms really had. Gumba, the area where I worked, was a sub-chiefdom of the Bailundo kingdom, albeit on the north-western frontier, neighbouring Camongue and Cela, where the people did not call themselves Va-Mbailundu, though their rulers acknowledged the suzerainty of the king of Bailundo. Old men told me of raids from Bailundo for slaves, but I cannot say *if* this was the result of the period of disorder mentioned, or whether sub-chiefdoms on the border of a kingdom gave only nominal submission and received only nominal protection. In the area where I worked,

[17] This is not intended as a personal reflection on Dr. Childs and the late Dr. Hastings, both of whom deserve the highest praise for their work and for their obvious devotion to the Ovimbundu. Hastings devoted far more space to the magico-religious field than to the kinship system. Likewise Childs's description of kinship is much shorter, much less detailed, and much less satisfactory than his account of childhood and adolescence, or the really outstanding historical chapter.

[18] Magyar, pp. 389-90; Childs, pp. 23-24.

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[1874-1911]

631/764 funerals (though these burials could be undertaken by the cross-cousins of the deceased). When *sakwatjiisolo* came to their partner-chiefdom for a funeral they had the right to steal small live-stock, such as chickens, or pigeons, but not cattle, goats, or pigs. An *akwatjiisolo* could sleep with the wives of his *sakwatjiisolo* partners without being sued for damages.[68]

[937]

631/[602] The ties of kinship and affinity crossed the boundaries of the sub-chiefdoms and even of the kingdoms.[69] The members [642] of the three spirit-protected professions, blacksmithing, divin- [574] ing, and hunting recognized obligations of hospitality to co-professionals from other parts of the country.[70] Again the caravans were so large that they must have involved people [937] from many sub-chiefdoms, which presupposes a wide range of contacts.

182 It may be said that the picture given here is contradictory and inadequate. How can the existence of large kingdoms be reconciled to the extreme insecurity described by old men? How do the wealthy caravan organizers fit into the political system? What sort of politics were there in the kingdoms? It is not easy to answer these questions owing to the lack of evidence, and, probably, because the kingdoms were already in decline during the latter part of the rubber trade period. Indeed, the impression that accounts of the Ovimbundu in the nineteenth century give is that of adventure, battle, commerce, migration —a vigorous rather than a stable society.[71]

61 The kinship system is perhaps the field of Umbundu society • 114 which has aroused most interest among anthropologists. Childs and Hastings have written much that is interesting on the old double-descent grouping but as, with the kinship system, the form has been described rather than the functioning and it is

[68] Informants. The account in Childs, pp. 114–15 differs considerably. For this institution elsewhere in Angola see Estermann, 'Class et alliances de class', *Anthropos*, 1932.

[69] Childs, p. 34.

[70] Informants.

[71] Magyar describes the king and his courtiers as being extremely despotic towards the villagers, and states that their despotism depended on their having a standing military force called 'Sons of the Elephant' (pp. 278–80). Later accounts do not mention this, and Childs notes (p. 109) that at the height of the rubber trade it was more difficult for the kings to recruit armies for their wars.

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[1874-1914]

not now possible for field work to supply the gaps in the written material.[78]

The traditional kinship system had neither clans nor segmenting lineages. The patrilineal group (*olusa*) was localized in a village, the group head being at the same time a village headman. Patrilineal ties do not seem to have been recognized between villages.[79] This social independence of the agnatically united village was reflected in the surrounding palisade, in the close clustering of the houses (nowadays much more spread out) and in the village institutions of the dancing-floor and the men's house (*ondjango*). It was here that all the men and boys, from seven or eight up, ate. Hastings writes, 'Each woman, after preparing the meal, takes or sends the portion which is for the male members of her family. This food is common property. As soon as enough has arrived some responsible member among the men will have it divided among the boys. For days a man may never taste of the food which is prepared by his wife.'[80] The men's house was also a club, and a court-room, where minor cases were decided. It was through this localized body of patrikin that an individual claimed land and residence rights and through it that he participated in the political system.[81]

The matrilineal group (the *olusia*) was composed of the descendants of a common great-great-grandmother.[82] According to Childs, it had a head who might also at times be a village headman,[83] and it was presumably the matrilineal group head who settled the disputes over property which Hambly says

[78] For an attempt at reconstructing Umbundu kinship on the basis of Childs's book see J. A. Barnes's review of *Umbundu Kinship and Character* in *Man*, 1950, pp. 126–128. It may be mentioned that the terms 'the side of the bow' and 'the side of the basket' are used simply to mean 'patrilateral kin' and 'matrilateral kin' (Dr. Childs, private information, and my own inquiries).

[79] A rather ambiguous phrase in Childs p. 43 ('The *olusa* consists of a large number of local village groups'), which might be interpreted as meaning that villages were patrilineally grouped into clans, seems really to mean simply that the village is the *olusa* unit.

[80] Hastings, p. 77.

[81] Ibid., p. 18. Childs, pp. 43–44.

[82] Hastings, p. 83, states that the matrilineal group consists of the descendants of a common great-great-great-grandmother (that is, five generations), and on p. 92 says that it consists of a group 'linked by a common great-great-grandmother'.

[83] Childs, p. 44.

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Some ten years later he was allowed to return to Gumba but died on the way back.

His successor was Simbwyikoka, who was a mother's brother's son of Mbati, that is in Umbundu terminology a 'son'. Umbundu rules of succession allow anybody to succeed to a chiefdom who is paternally or maternally related to a previous chief, whether or not this relationship is genealogically traceable.[3]

Simbwyikoka was apparently nominated to act as regent during Mbati's absence, and as he did not complete the full cycle of chiefly rites he did not have quite the same prestige among the people as a chief in his own right who 'had finished', that is, had gone through all the rites. It was he who was the last ruler of Gumba to send the annual tribute in the form of a sack of fish to Bailundo, since it was a little after the time of his accession that Kandimba[4] (or Njahulu), the last of the Bailundo royal house to have any real authority over the kingdom, died.

Simbwyikoka had lived at the hamlet of Kamballa in Gumba. When he took up office he did not settle at Mbati's village of Katembo, but established, or rather re-established, as a previous chief had ruled there, his capital[5] on the top of the narrow ridge which cuts off the greater part of Gumba from access by road. It was not possible for many people to settle on this site. Accordingly Simbwyikoka encouraged people to settle at the foot of the ridge, swelling the population of an already existing village. This was called Mwekalia from the headman, who held the office of Mwekalia[6] another ministerial title associated with the chiefly court.

In 1938 Simbwyikoka was deposed by the *chefe* for shielding his dependents from the operation of 'contract labour' (administrative recruitment of non-voluntary labour). About 1944

[3] My informants. This means that within (and outside) any sub-chiefdom there are a number of potential heirs who in no way receive any special status or form any kind of corporate group from this fact.

[4] Reigned at Bailundo 1911–35. Childs, p. 109

[5] In Umbundu Ombala, often transcribed in Portuguese as Embala.

[6] For the role of Mwekalia see Hastings, p. 39. His statement that the office is matrilineally inherited was not confirmed by my informants. It seems that it can be inherited either patrilineally or matrilineally. The man who was known as Mwekalia and had been headman of the village of that name did not function as such at the chief's court during my stay. A kinsman of his, Ngumbe, acted as Mwekalia at the court of Lunsar.

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[Village of Epa[anga]

cluster was much more autonomous *vis-à-vis* Sapupula than were the members of the Mbati-Mwehombo grouping through the more numerous and closer kin ties; yet it would be wrong to regard Ndjoleya's kin as isolated.[4] This greater autonomy was a matter of degree rather than kind.

With regard to geographical origin, it is evident that the population had been recruited from over quite a wide area. Of the 36 household heads 7 were born in Cela of whom 6 had come from Cela to Gumba, and 1 had been born in Cela, then come to Gumba, then moved to Menga and then returned to Gumba. 3 household heads had come from Utende to Gumba, and 2 had come from Namba. 12 had come to Epalanga from Cassongue. 7 household heads (including 2 who had subsequently lived in Cassongue) had at one time lived in Katembo (the village associated with Mbati). 1 householder was apparently born in Gumba but had no Katembo link. 2 household heads were from Ndjandju (one having lived in Cassongue after leaving Ndjandju, the other being the catechist) and 1 was from Chicunda. On the origins of 5 household heads I have no information.

My information on Epalanga suffers from a number of gaps. Some genealogical information collected was lost. Too frequently I neglected to ask if a particular relationship was patrilateral or matrilateral, nor did I enquire sufficiently as to whether particular marriages were between kinsfolk or not.

These deficiencies to some extent 'fit' the kinship system. A kinship tie may exist between two people which is significant in the social relations between them, yet they may not be sure as to whether it is patrilateral or matrilateral, or even as to what is the category of kinship involved. Thus a resident of Simbwyikoka's village told me one day that Simbwyikoka was his 'brother', some time later he was a brother-in-law, and after this again said that he was a 'brother'.

There is also confusion over pedigrees. The pedigree which Simbwyikoka gave me in December 1955 differed from the one that he gave me in April 1956. Two people who claim to be

[4] Ndjoleya once referred to himself as *Ombala yimbe* (elder of the *imbe*) this being a name of *imbe* used for a cluster within a village. Ndjoleya's folk recognized Sapupula as being head of the village.

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with anthropological knowledge and interests, Dr. Daniel A. Hastings and Dr. Gladwyn Murray Childs, have written on Umbundu kinship.[5] Mr. Hambly's main interest was in material culture and the conditions of his fieldwork were not such as to give him much evidence on the kinship system.[6] Both Dr. Hastings and Dr. Childs recognized the central importance of kinship in Umbundu social life, but have outlined the kinship ties and kinship groups rather than given a detailed analysis.

602 Mr. Hambly states that 'The phrase *Epata Lia Tate* (or *Olate*) means "family of my father" and includes all relatives on the father's side. The words *Epata Lia Mai* (or *Olaisa*) mean "family of my mother".'[7] This could mean that the Umbundu kinship system is bilateral. He states that inheritance is matrilineal and marriage virilocal, a situation consistent with such a matrilineal kinship system as that of the Bakongo.[8]

613 622 Dr. Hastings, whose thesis was completed the year before the publication of Hambly's book, makes it clear that there are two sets of kin groups. 'Over each village is a ruling elder who is the head of the kinship group of that village since all who reside in the village are generally related to him and to each other patrilineally. This elder, greatly revered, is considered the patriarch of that local group. Residence being patrilocal, 597 the office of an elder is hereditary through the male line.'[9] He 613 then goes on to contrast with this, 'the matrilineal sib to which each member is linked, though he may be living in a village away from his sib group.'[9] This group is a clearly defined

[5] Works cited in footnotes to Chapter I. There is a typescript of Hastings's thesis in the library of the International African Institute, London.

[6] Mr. Hambly spent five months in the country, and used as his interpreter and main informant an English-speaking Ocimbundu. He seems simply to have visited villages without living in them. Dr. Childs and Dr. Hastings had both spent several years as 'bush' missionaries. Dr. Childs had actually taken over from Dr. Hastings work in the area to the north-west of Bailundo in the direction of Bimbe, and had subsequently obtained information in Cameroon. He later obtained a good deal of material from African pastors, teachers and schoolboys.

[7] Hambly, pp. 191–2.

[8] For the Bakongo see the discussion by A. I. Richards, in Radcliffe-Brown and Forde, pp. 213–51. Anthropologists have more than once suggested to the author that the Umbundu system was not of the 'double-descent' category but some combination of virilocal marriage and matrilineal descent.

[9] Hastings, p. 18.

[9] Ibid.

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non-kin, which is not marked in ordinary social life, becomes important. Kinship marriages transform 'distant' kin ties into close affinal ties which will in the next generation become close kinship ties.

It is extremely difficult even to guess how this system operated in the past. Did the high rate of preferential marriages have the same function formerly as now? Or has the institution continued in being, while its function relative to the total society has changed? The testimony of that informant of Dr. Childs who told him that formerly all marriages were kin marriages and that patrilaterally one only married on 'the side of the basket' and matrilaterally only on 'the side of the bow'[4] has led Professor Barnes to suggest[5] that the preferential marriages functioned as links between descent groups. Both Dr. Childs and myself, however, have found that 'the side of the bow' and 'the side of the basket' are simply synonyms for '*olaze*' and '*olaisa*'.[6] Moreover, my informants did not confirm his statement since they denied the right of marriage with a father's sister, and the quantitative information shows that even in the past some marriages were with non-kinswomen, and that others were with categories of kin theoretically forbidden, so that, then as now, the preferential marriages were with distant kinswomen rather than with a specific category of kin.

If, however, kinship marriages in the past operated as they now do, it is difficult to see their relation to the patrilineal and matrilineal groups. A clue to a solution is surely given by the custom of 'cutting the blood', which destroyed kinship to begin affinity. Marriages were arranged, it may be suggested, with those people who were still just kin, and who probably often were also geographically as well as socially distant so that the number of ties outside the sub-chiefdom might be increased, a matter of importance for long-distance traders. Later, Portuguese rule made travel no longer dependent on such long range contacts. Meanwhile the disintegration of the agnatic residence

[4] The exact words are 'Formerly people never married unless they were related, that is to say unless they touched the blood together. If in the mother's kin (*l'olaisa*) only on the side of the bow (i.e. male line). If in the father's kin (*l'olaze*) only on the side of the basket (i.e. female line)'. See Childs, pp. 33-36.

[5] Review of Childs in *Man*, 1950, pp. 126-8.

[6] Dr. Childs was speaking to the synopsis of Barnes's interpretation.